The Great Concern:

OR, A

SERIOUS WARNING

To a Timely and Thorough

PREPARATION

FOR

DEATH:

With Helps and Directions in order thereunto.

By *EDWARD PEARSE.*

John 9. 4. *I must work the Works of him that sent me, while it is day: The night cometh when no Man can work.*

Recommended as proper to be given at FUNERALS.

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PEARSE, Edward

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TO THE READER.

READER,

IF thou art one, who indeed liveſt in the belief of a future Life, on Eternity of Happineſs or Miſery, when time and days ſhall be no more, I am confident the enſuing Diſcourſe will be grateful and welcome to thee: I make no Apology for its plainneſs, nor am I at all ſolicitous touching the Cenſures I may fall under for publiſhing of it: If thou wilt read it with an upright Heart, I queſtion not but through a Bleſſing from above, it may do thy Soul good: Sure I am, thou wilt find the Argument moſt weighty, and the Concern thereof moſt important: And woe be to that Soul which miſſeth the deſign it tends to, and aims at. When Men come to die, and do find themſelves launching forth into the vaſt Ocean of Eternity, at

leaſt when once they find themſelves incircled in that Ocean, which (quickly they do, when once Death makes its approach) then they ſee that their great Intereſt lay beyond this poor, vain, periſhing World, and the things thereof; then they ſee that their Great Concern *was to have look'd and liv'd beyond Time and Days, and have made proviſion for an Eternal State; but alas! alas! then 'tis too late: Then they cry out, O Eternity, Eternity! O miſerable Souls that we are! how did Sin and the World blind and bewitch us, that we could not e'er now, when 'tis too late, ſee the weight of an Eternal Intereſt! O blind and brutiſh Creatures, that were taken with carnal and ſenſual things, things pleaſing only to a ſenſual Appetite; and forgot God, the chief Good, the things of Heaven and a bleſſed Eternity, which would have made us happy for ever. Now to prevent theſe doleful Lamentations, and ſuch a diſmal and remedileſs*

dileſs Shipwrack of Eternal Souls, as alſo to ſhew them the path of Life, and to engage them to make ſure of a bleſſed Eternity, while Time and Days laſt, is the Deſign of the enſuing Diſcourſe, and of the dying Author in it. And the Lord, the God of all Grace, proſper it in order thereunto. God has kept me for full half a Year by the Graves ſide; one while lifting me up, then caſting me down, and now he ſeems to be ſpeedily finiſhing my days, to whom, through the infinite riches of free Grace, I can with ſome comfort and boldneſs ſay, Come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly, Amen. *And now farewel vain World, farewel Friends and Relations, farewel Eating and Drinking; and, bleſſed be God, farewel Sin and Sinning; within a few days I ſhall ſin no more, nor ever be in a poſſibility of ſinning, but ſhall be like my Lord, and ſhall ſee him as he is. And laſtly farewel Reader.*

E. P.

A Propoſition for the more profitable Improvement of Burials, by giving of Books.

THat great Stupidity that is on the generality of Mankind concerning their Mortality, does manifeſt the uſefulneſs of Books of this Subject: For although Men know, that, by reaſon of the firſt Tranſgreſſion, It is appointed for all Men once to die; Though the Principles of this Natural Life (by which it is upheld) are ſo weak that they cannot ſupport it long; though there are many internal Cauſes, that, as ſecret Mines, may ſoon blow up Men, even of the ſtrongeſt Conſtitution; and many external Cauſes, as a Tile from a Houſe, or the ſtumbling of a Horſe, that may ſoon caſt Men into the Grave; tho there are continual Repreſentations and Spectacles of Mortality, in which Men, as in a Glaſs, may behold their Natural Face; and though Men always carry about them the Symoms of Mortality, and the Marks of Death, yet they ſtnerally live as if they ſhould never die. In ſmall geillages where inſtances of Mortality are very rare; there the inward thoughts of their Hearts reem to be, that they and their Houſes ſhall contiſnue for ever, and their Dwelling-places to all Generations. In Populous Towns and Cities, there the commonneſs takes away the ſenſe of Mortality.

And how ſad is it to behold the unſuitable carriage of the generality of Chriſtians at Funerals! Thoſe Opportunities are uſually ſpent in unprofitable Chat, in Mirth, in Eating and Drinking, and that ſometimes to exceſs; and thus the Houſe of Mourning is turned into the Houſe of Mirth and Feaſting.

To cure this evil Frame, we have thought good to propound that which we find to be the wiſh of the generality of Pious Perſons, viz.

viz. **That Books of this nature may be given at Burials,** *inſtead of* Rings, Gloves, Biskets, Wine, *&c. Reading and Meditation would be much more decent at ſuch ſad Solemnities, than Eating and Drinking, and putting on of Ornaments. Books of this Subject would make People mind the preſent inſtance of Mortality and affect them with ſuch devout Meditations as theſe.* Lord! this Tragedy that is now acting on our deceaſed Friend, muſt e'er long (*God knows how ſoon*) be acted on us all; our breath is ready to periſh; the Earth is gaping for us; yet a little while and we ſhall be carried down into the Chambers of Death. Lord! Teach us ſo to number our Days, that we may apply our Hearts unto true ſaving Wiſdom. *No doubt, much good may redound to the Souls of Men this way; and God be thanked, we can teſtifie where it has been practiſed, People have been made more ſerious on ſuch ſad occaſions.*

If therefore, Reader, *thou art one of thoſe that deſires to mind thine own Concern, and to ſtir up others to a timely and thorough preparation for Death,* we *queſtion not but thou wilt approve of, and recommend to others this our* Propoſition: *In which, again, we aſſure thee (however ſome cenſorious Perſons, that take meaſures of us by their own narrow Spirits, may judg) we do not ſo much aim at our own private gain, as the publick of all good Chriſtians.*

If Chriſtians are ſo well minded, as to embrace this Propoſition, *we think fit to inſert the names of ſome Books proper for the purpoſe,* viz. *for the poorer ſort, Books of* 6d. *price.*

The Guide to Heaven.

Bury's Improvement of Death, *&c.*

Propoſition, &c.

Books of 1 s. price.

Pearſe on Death.
Flavil's Token for Mourners.
Baxter's Now or Never.
Great Aſſize, &c.
Contemplatio Mortis.
Dr. *Bates* on Heaven.

Books of 1 *s.* 6 *d.* and 2 *s.*

Dr. *Bates* of Final Happineſs.
——His Treatiſe of Death and Judgment.
Dr. *Patrick*'s Hearts-Eaſe, &c.
——His Divin. Arithmetick.
Baxter of Death and Judgment.
Guide to Eternity.
Mirrour that flatters not.
Drexelius on Eternity.

For the Richer ſort, Books of 4, 5, 6 *s.* price, *viz.*

Drelincourt's Defence againſt the fear of Death.
Taylor's Holy Living and Dying.
How's Bleſſedneſs of the Righteous; *with many others.*

We may ſay of a Book given at Funerals, what the Divine Herbert *ſays of a Verſe*, viz.

A Book may find him, who a Sermon flies
And turn a Gift into a Sacrifice.

J. Robinſon.
B. Aylmer.

The Author hath alſo publiſhed two other ſmall Treatiſes, *viz.*

The beſt Match; or, the Souls Eſpouſal to Chriſt.
A Beam of Divine Glory: or, a Treatiſe of God's Unchangeableneſs.

THE

THE
Great Concern:
OR,
Preparation for *Death.*

Pſalm 39. 13.

O ſpare me, that I may recover ſtrength, before I go hence, and be no more.

CHAP. I.

Which contains an Introduction, and an Explication of the Words of the Text, with the general Truth of them, and therein the Foundation of our intended Diſcourſe.

TO walk with God here on Earth while we live; and to be ready to live with God for ever in Heaven when we come to die, is the great Work we have to do, the great Concern we have to mind, in our preſent Pilgrimage. To grow great and high in the World, to build

our Names and Families, to live a Life of ſenſual Pleaſures and delights ſpending our days in Mirth; theſe are low and mean, poor things; things infinitely beneath the dignity of a Soul, and altogether unworthy of the leaſt of its care and ſolicitude: But to know God, to love God, to obey God, to delight in God, to contemplate the glorious Excellencies and Perfections of God, to live upon God, and to live to God; upon him as our chief Good and Happineſs, and to him as our laſt end, and withal to be found ready at laſt to live with him for ever, to enter upon the Beatifical Viſion, and to paſs into that Life of Love and Holineſs, which the Saints and Angels live above, being made perfect in the Viſion and Fruition of the God of Glory; this is truly Noble, this is worthy of the Care and Solicitude of Souls. To promote theſe things, and more eſpecially the later, is my Deſign in fixing my Meditations upon this Scripture, which I am the rather induced to do, becauſe I am apprehenſive, that the Time of my going hence, when I ſhall be ſeen no more, is drawing very nigh. The Words are a holy and prophetical Wiſh and Deſire, breathed out into the Boſom of God by the Man after his own Heart: And that when under ſore and heavy Afflictions; under grievous Sickneſſes, ſay ſome; under great Straits and Diſtreſſes, by reaſon of *Abſalom*'s Rebellion and Conſpiracy againſt him, ſay others. In this Wiſh or Deſire of his, you may note three things.

1. What

1. What that is which he wiſheth for, or deſires of God, and that is, ſparing Mercy, *O ſpare me.*

2. The End of this Wiſh or Deſire of his, and that is, the Recovery of Strength: *O ſpare me, that I may recover ſtrength.*

3. The Ground or Motive which induced him to make this Deſire for this End, and that was the near Approach of his Death, in theſe Words, *Before I go hence, and be no more ſeen.* I will briefly Paraphraſe the Words for the opening of them, and then give you the Sum of them, as alſo my Intendment for them, in one general Poſition.

O ſpare me, that is, ceaſe to ſmite and afflict me, give me a little relaxation, a breathing time, ſo one expounds it: Deal gently and mildly with me, ſays another. Withdraw thy Hand a little from ſcourging me. and mitigate the violence of my afflictions, ſay others, *that I may recover Strength*; that I may recruit my ſelf a little, ſaith one. That I may have a breathing-time before my Death, and being well compoſed, may lay down my Spirit, and commit it into thy Hand, ſay others. *That I may grow ſtrong in Grace and Holineſs*, ſay others. That I may finiſh my Courſe, and Fight a good Fight, obtaining

Ceſſa percutere & affligere, &c. Mol. *Leniter mecum age.* Mar. *Abſtine aliquantulum manus tuas a flagellando.* Menoch.

Ut reſpirem ante mortem, & tranquillus animam meam in manum tuam deponam. Mol.

taining the Victory through a happy Death; ſay others. The Sum is, That I may ſet things right in my Soul, and get into a more ready poſture for my Death and Diſſolution, which ſeems to be near at hand. *Before I go hence, and be no more*; that is, before I die, never more to return into this Life; before I quit this World, and bid adieu to this mortal Life, to be no more in the Land of the Living, to be no more in this World, to do any thing for God or my Soul: For (as one obſerves) *David* doth not here ſuppoſe Death to be the utter end, or annihilation of Man, the putting of a Man out of being: But his meaning is, if God did ſtill go on to afflict him, as he had done, he muſt ſuddenly die, ſuddenly go off the Stage of this World, and go down to the Bars of Death, to the Gates of the Grave: whereas to any thing that is to be done for God, or a Man's Soul, it is, as if he were out of Being; and where he will be kept for ever from returning any more to this Life, or any opportunity of ever doing any thing for another World. It is a Phraſe like to, and of the ſame importance with that, *Job* 16. 22. where *Job* ſpeaks of himſelf, *When a few Years are come, then ſhall I go the way, whence I ſhall not return: Not return*, that is, not any more to this Life: not to return to do any thing for God or my Soul. The ſum of the whole

Antequam morior in hanc vitam nunquam reverſurus. Jun.

whole ſeems to be thus much; the good Man's Afflictions were ſo preſſing and heavy upon him that they did ever bow him down to the Grave; and he really looked upon himſelf as a dying Man, as one going down to the duſt of the Earth; where he knew full well, nothing was to be done for another Life, and from whence there was no return to this Life to be expected any more, and therefore he begs a breathing-time, a little ſpace wherein to recover himſelf out of all preſent Diſtempers, and Diſcompoſures of Heart, and to ſet all things right in the matter of his Soul; thereby fitting and preparing himſelf the better for his Departure out of this World: He begs a time of reſpit wherein to prepare himſelf and make ready for a dying hour. This is the ſum of what he drives at, and pleads with God for, according to the Obſervation, and wherein the Sum of my Intendment ſhall be this.

Doct. *That 'tis a very deſirable thing, and a Buſineſs of the higheſt moment and importance to the Children of Men, to have all things ſet right, well-ordered, and compoſed in the Matters of their Souls, before they leave this World; to get all the Spiritual Concerns of their Souls into the beſt poſture they can, before a Dying Hour comes.*

David an Holy Man, a Man in Covenant with God, yea, *a Man after God's own Heart*, doth yet (you ſee) pray for ſparing Mercy, for

for a breathing-time, a time of reſpite here in this World before he goeth off the Stage; And why ſo? *That he might recover Strength*, that he might ſet things right in the matters of his Soul; that he might make himſelf more ready, and get his Spiritual Concerns into a better Poſture for a dying Hour; and this he looked at, and made out after, as that which was moſt deſirable, and of the higheſt Importance to him, as indeed 'tis to all. You have a Scripture not unlike to this, *Job* 10. 20, 21. *Are not my Days few? Ceaſe then, and let me alone, that I may take Comfort a little, before I go whence I ſhall not return, even to the Land of Darkneſs, and of the Shadow of Death*: That I may take Comfort a little, that I may recover a little, that I may have a breathing-time, that I may recover my ſelf, and gather up my Spirits: So I find the Phraſe expounded. He ſeems to deſire a breathing-time; the better to compoſe himſelf and the Matters of his Soul for a dying Hour. And indeed, 'tis the Concern of us all, to ſet all things right in our Souls, and to get into the readieſt Poſture that poſſibly we can, againſt a dying Hour comes. I ſhall firſt briefly evince this Truth, and then make ſome Practical Improvement of it.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Wherein is ſhewn the exceeding great weight of dying Work, and extream Difficulty of a dying hour, as the firſt evidence of our Aſſertion.

DYing Work, my Beloved, is great Work, and a dying hour is a difficult Hour; and therefore we had need have all things well ordered, and ready in the Matters of our Souls, againſt that Time, that Work, that Hour comes. I will lay the Weight of Dying Work, and the Difficulty of a Dying Hour before you in four Propoſitions.

Firſt Propoſition is this, (That Death in it ſelf, and in its own Nature, if we look no further) is a very terrible thing; and we had need have all things ſet right in our Souls, all things in order, when we come to encounter with it. The Philoſopher who look'd not beyond the natural Notion of Death, called it, Πάντων τ φοβερῶν φοβερώτατον. *Ariſt.* the moſt terrible of all terrible things. And in *Job* 18. 14. The Holy Ghoſt himſelf calls it *the King of Terrors*: *His Confidence* (ſpeaking of a wicked Man,) *ſhall bring him to the King of Terrors, i. e.* to Death, which is moſt formidable: Indeed 'tis therefore called the King of Terrors, becauſe it is the greateſt and ſtrongeſt Terror. And Death muſt needs be terrible in it ſelf.

1. Be

1. Becauſe it deprives us of all our ſweet Comforts and Enjoyments here in this World, and puts an eternal period to our fruition of them. Here we enjoy much good, many ſtreams which run pleaſantly on each Hand of us, (it may be) but when Death comes, that deprives us of all. *Naked came I into the World, and naked ſhall I return*, Job 1. 21. So the Apoſtle, *We brought nothing into this World, and it is certain we ſhall carry nothing out*, ſpeaking as to our outward Comforts here, 1 *Tim.* 6. 7. The *Pſalmiſt* to the ſame effect, *Pſal.* 49. 17. ſpeaks of a rich Man; *He ſhall carry nothing away, His Glory* (ſaith he) *ſhall not deſcend after him.* Death, as one obſerves, is the greateſt Leveller in the World, it levels Scepters and Plow-ſhares, it makes the Prince as poor as the Peaſant.

2. Becauſe it diſſolves the Union between the Soul and the Body: Death is indeed the rending of Body and Soul, (thoſe old and loving Companions) aſunder. Now all Diſunions (as a worthy Divine obſerves) are uncomfortable, and ſome Diſunions are terrible: And, as ſome Diſunions are terrible, ſo thoſe are of all others moſt terrible, that do rend them from us which are moſt dear to us. Now what Union ſo near, as that between the Soul and Body? and therefore what Diſunion ſo terrible, as the diſſolution of this Union? The diſſolving the Union between a Man and his Wife is terrible, becauſe they are nearly united each to other; but the diſſolving the Union between Soul and Body is more

more terrible; becauſe the Union is more near and cloſe. A Man and his Wife *are one Fleſh*; but the Soul and Body make but one Perſon; now Death diſſolves this Union. While we live, the Soul dwells in the Body, informs the Body, acts in and by the Body: it hath a great influence upon, and is greatly influenced by the Body: but when Death comes, then the Soul and Body part, till the Reſurrection; *one returning to the Duſt whence it came, the other to God who gave it*, Eccleſ. 12. 7.

3. It is the deſtroying and demoliſhing of the Body of Man, that famous and curious Fabrick, and a bringing it into Duſt and Putrefaction, *Pſal.* 90. 3. It turns a living Body into a dead Carcaſe, a lifeleſs Lump of Clay, and cauſeth it to become Meat for Worms to feed on, *Job* 19. 26. The Body of Man is a very curious piece of Workmanſhip, ſuch as wherein the infinite Power and Wiſdom of God is much ſeen and manifeſted, *Pſal.* 139. 14, 15. But when Death comes, it marrs and demoliſhes all, ſtains all its Beauty, and draws a Veil upon all its Glory. Sickneſs often makes a Man's Beauty to *conſume away like a Moth*, as you have it, *Pſal.* 39. 11. But Death utterly defaces it, and draws a Veil upon it, that turns his Beauty into blackneſs and deformity. One of the Antients ſtanding by *Cæſar*'s Tomb, wept, ſaying, Where is now the Beauty of *Cæſar*? What now is become of all his Magnificence? In a word, as Life is the ſweeteſt of all outward Mercies, ſo Death is the ſharpeſt of all outward Afflictions:

The

The Pains of it are Pains to a Proverb; the Sorrows of it are Sorrows to a Proverb: *The Sorrows of Death compaſs me about*, Pſal. 116. 3. Now if Death be thus terrible in it ſelf; then judge ye, whether we had not need to have all things ready, and in order when it comes.

Second Propoſition is, That in a dying Hour the Devil is moſt fierce and terrible in his Aſſaults and Temptations upon the Soul. The Devil is in the Scripture called a *Roaring Lion*; and is uſually moſt ſo againſt the Poor People of God, when they come to die: *Then he hath Wrath, becauſe he knows his Time is ſhort.* To allude to that, *Rev.* 12. 12. When a Man or Woman comes to die, the Devil knows he has but a ſhort Time to tempt, to vex, to terrifie that Soul; and therefore, then uſually he exerciſes great Wrath; then he ſtirs up all his Wrath, all his Malice, all his Cruelty againſt him; he ſees this is the laſt Caſt he is like to have for it, the laſt Onſet he is ever like to make upon the Soul's Faith and Comfort, and that now the Battel is to be won or loſt for ever; therefore now he roars and rages terribly indeed, now he diſcharges all his Murdering Pieces againſt the Soul, to make Batteries, if poſſible, upon the Soul's Fort of Salvation, and to ſhake its Foundation of Life and Happineſs. The Devil is the Enemy of Souls, *Mal.* 13. 25. and his Enmity works eſpecially one of theſe two ways; Either, firſt, to keep them from Life and Happineſs; and here he acts rather like an Angel of Light, than a Roaring Lion: He works

works rather in a way of Flattery, than in a way of Terror. Hence we read of his *Wiles Methods, Devices,* and the like; his cunning fallacious Workings, thereby to deſtroy Souls. Or, Secondly, to trouble and torment Souls in their way to Life and Happineſs: And here he is indeed like a Roaring Lion, and never more than when we come to die. There are among others two Seaſons, wherein the Devil is moſt fierce and terrible in his aſſaults upon the Soul. The firſt is, when a Man is going from Sin to Grace, when he is fully reſolved to cloſe with Chriſt, to ſhake off the Yoke of Sin, and to take upon him the Yoke of *Jeſus*. The Second is, When a Man is going from Grace to Glory; when he is going off the Stage of Time to Eternity; when a Man begins to live a Spiritual Life, and when a Man comes to die a Natural Death. I know, firſt, That as for his own Children he uſually lets them alone, when they come to die: He is afraid to have them diſturbed; though ſometimes he cannot forbear, but torments them before their time. Secondly, God can, and ſometimes does chain him up, ſo that he ſhall not be able to trouble and torment the Saints in their paſſage out of this World: Yet ſtill, I ſay, for the moſt part he does fiercely aſſault them then; and doubtleſs, there are but very few of the Children of God, but do meet with very ſore Aſſaults from Satan when they come to die; then he turns Accuſer; then he charges the Soul with all its Sins; then he tells him, he is an Hypocrite,

Hypocrite, that all his profeſſion hath been nothing but a deluſion, and the like. Now is Satan thus fierce and terrible in his aſſaults upon the Soul in a dying Hour? Surely then we had need have all ready againſt that Hour comes.

3. The Third Propoſition is this; That in a dying Hour Conſcience is moſt awakened; and ſo moſt quick and ſmart in its Threats and Charges againſt the Soul, if all be not right within; and therefore we had need have all ſo in that Hour. There are three Seaſons in which Conſcience is moſt awake in the Soul. Firſt, When God begins to deal with the Soul in order to Life and Salvation: Then God lets Conſcience Looſe upon a Man. Hence we read of them, that they *were pricked at their Heart*, in the ſenſe of Sin; the word is, they were pricked through and through, *Acts* 2. 37. And ſaith *Paul*, *When Sin revived, I died*, Rom. 7. 9. That is, in the ſight of my Sin, which was wrought in me by the Law of God, I was made to ſee my ſelf loſt and miſerable, and awakened out of my Security. Secondly, When the Soul is under ſome ſmart and notable Afflictions from the Hand of God: This is evident in that inſtance of *Joſeph*'s Brethren, whoſe Conſciences were awakened when they were in diſtreſs, and charged them with the guilt of their Sin in ſelling their Brother, *Gen.* 42. 21. Thirdly, When a Man comes to die, when the Viſions of Death and the Grave are before him. Oh! you little think how ſtrict Conſcience will be

be in its ſearch, how ſharp in its charge, and how ſevere in its cenſure in a dying Hour: Then if there be but the leaſt frown in God's Face towards the Soul, the leaſt flaw in his Peace, the leaſt blot or blur in his Evidences for Heaven; if there be but the leaſt ſtain upon the Spirit, the leaſt Sin unpardoned, unrepented of, it is a Thouſand to one but Conſcience will take notice of it, and charge the Soul with it. O Sirs, you will find a great deal of difference between Conſcience upon a Bed of Eaſe, and Conſcience upon a Sick-bed; between Conſcience in an Hour of Health and Worldly Proſperity, and Conſcience in a Dying Hour: In the one, great things bear but little weight; but in the other, little things uſually bear great weight in Conſcience: Then the Language of Conſcience to the Soul is, Theſe and theſe things haſt thou done; thus and thus things ſtand with thee; at beſt, Grace is thus and thus weak, Corruption thus and thus ſtrong, Temptations thus and thus prevalent, the Heart thus and thus out of frame, the Spirit thus and thus alienated from God, and the like: Hence 'tis that at Death there are ſuch Confeſſions as you have ſometimes from Men and Women, that now they will ſend for ſome Godly Miniſter or Chriſtian to pray with them and for them; though perhaps they could not endure Prayer all their Life-time before. Now if in a dying-hour, Conſcience be thus quick and ſmart in its threats and charges againſt the Soul; then ſurely

we

we had need, and 'tis plainly our Concern, to have all ready, and in order, againſt that Hour comes.

The Fourth Propoſition is this, That in a Dying Hour we ſhall have to do with God, in a very ſtupendious and amazing Way, in ſuch a Way as may well ſtartle and affright us to think of it: we are ſaid *to have to do with God* here, Heb. 4. 13. We have here to do with God in Duties, in Ordinances, in Mercies, in Afflictions: Indeed we had as good never have to do with theſe, unleſs we have to do with God in theſe: But though we have to do with God here while we live, yet know, we ſhall have to do with God in anotherguess way when we come to die; in ſuch a Way as may well overwhelm us to think of it. I ſhall give it you in three Steps: Then we have to do with God immediately; with God immediately as our Judge, with God immediately as our Judg for Eternity: And O how loud do theſe things call upon us to get all in order in the Matters of our Souls againſt a dying Hour comes!

1. When a Man comes to die, he has to do with God immediately; and that is an aſtoniſhing thing, In *Death* the Body crumbles to Duſt; *but the Soul returneth to God who gave* it: So the Holy Ghoſt tells us, *Eccleſ.* 12. 7. The Body which came from the Duſt, crumbles to Duſt again; But the Soul, that goeth unto God's immediate preſence, to deal and to treat with him as it were Face to Face; the Soul is always with God, and cannot poſ-

ſibly

ſibly be out of his Preſence, *Pſal.* 139. 7. And yet here the Holy Ghoſt tells us, when we die, theSoul returns to God; intimating that then the Soul goes into the immediate Preſence of God, and has more immediately to do with him, than here he was ever wont to have; then he beholds his Naked Majeſty and Glory. Now what an aſtoniſhing thing is this? You will find (if you obſerve) that the Saints of God, yea, the Holieſt of them, when they have dealt with God in a more immediate Way than ordinary, they have been overwhelmed by it: Take for an Inſtance *Daniel*, who, upon receiving Viſions from God, tells us, *There remained no Strength in him: That his Comlineſs was turned into Corruption*, Dan. 10. 8. I might Inſtance alſo in *John*, who upon a View of, and Converſe with Chriſt, that was a little more immediate than ordinary, *Fell down at his Feet as dead*, Rev. 1. 17. Alſo that of *Jacob*, *I have ſeen the Lord Face to Face, and yet my Life is preſerved*, (ſays he) intimating it was a Wonder that he could ſo immediately ſee God and live, *Gen.* 32. 10. Now if we are to deal with God immediately when we come to die, we had need have all in order before a dying Hour comes.

2. When a Man comes to die, he has to do with God immediately, as his Judge; as one that is to try him for his Life; to paſs Sentence upon his Soul; to determine his State in Righteouſneſs, meaſuring our Life or Death, Happineſs or Vengeance to him in the other World:

World: And is not this an aſtoniſhing and an amazing thing? *Then* (ſaith *Solomon*, ſpeaking of Death) *ſhall the Duſt return to the Earth as it was, and the Spirit return to God who gave it*, Eccleſ. 12. 7. At Death the Spirit returns to God; but it is to God, as a Judg, to determine his future Condition for him. *We muſt all ſtand before the Judgment-Seat of Chriſt, and every one muſt give an account of himſelf to God:* So the Scripture tells us, *Rom.* 10. 12 And, *It is appointed for all Men once to die, and after that the Judgment*, Heb. 9. 27. When a Man comes to die, that which is immediately before him, is the Judgment of God; the ſtrict, the righteous, the impartial Judgment of God; then away goes the Soul into the immediate Preſence of God, as ſitting upon the Throne of Judgment, to paſs a Sentence of Life or Death, Salvation or Damnation, upon him: And (believe it) we had need to have all things ſet right and well ordered in our Souls, when we come thus to deal with him: We had need have all things well ordered, and ſet right in the matters of our Souls, when we come to deal with God but as ſitting upon a Throne of Grace; but much more, when we come to deal with him as ſitting upon a Throne of Judgment, to conclude and determine our future Condition what it ſhall be. Judgment is an aſtoniſhing and terrifying thing; *the hearing of it made* Felix *tremble*, or (as the word is) it turned him into Terror and Affrightment, *Acts* 24. 25. And the Apoſtle calls it, *the Terror of the Lord*, 2 Cor. 5. 11. Now when a Man comes to

die

die, then he ſays, or may ſay, Now I am to deal with the Great God, the Judge of all; Now I muſt appear before his righteous Tribunal, and have the ſtate of my Soul determined for Life or Death, Salvation or Damnation in the other World. O how great a thing is this!

3. When a Man comes to die, he has to do with God immediately, as his Judge for Eternity: and this ſpeaks it yet more terrifying and aſtoniſhing: For though a Man is then to deal with God immediately, and that as his Judge too; yet if it were but for a time, for ſome ſhort Term of Years, it would not be altogether ſuch a terrifying and amazing thing: but alas! it is for Eternity, and therefore his Judgment is called *Eternal Judgment*, Heb. 6. 2. Hence *Auſtin* ſpeaking of Death, calls it *Oſtium Æternitatis*, the Gate of Eternity, *i. e.* The Gate or Door that lets Men out into Eternity; an Eternity of Life or *Death*, Salvation or Damnation; the Sentence which God will then paſs upon the Soul, will be an eternal Sentence; and the Soul muſt be eternally under the execution of it, whether it be for Life or Death, Salvation or Damnation. When a Man comes to die, he then ſees himſelf launching forth into the great Ocean of Eternity; he ſees his Eternal All to be immediately at ſtake, and his eternal ſtate to be immediately determined by the Great and Holy God: Now he ſees he muſt ſhoot the Great Gulf, and take up his Abode in the Eternal Region: This fills him with Amazement: O now, ſays he, a Sentence muſt paſs upon me

once for all; now I must shoot the Great Gulf; now I must launch forth into the great Ocean, where neither Bounds nor Bottom is to be found for ever: Now I must enter upon Eternal Joys, or Eternal Flames; an endless Life, either with God or Devils in Heaven or Hell: Now I shall find Infiniteness and Eternity combine to do their utmost, to make me happy, or miserable for ever: Now I must become the immediate Object either of infinite Wrath, or infinite Love, infinite Hatred, or infinite Delight, and that for ever. Now I must hear from God, either, *Come thou blessed*, or *Depart thou cursed*, and that for ever: And O what an astonishing thing is this! O Eternity, Eternity! O vast Eternity! O great Eternity! O boundless Eternity! One serious view of it is enough to amaze a poor Soul, looking upon it at a distance: But how much more amazing must it needs be, when it shall be immediately before the Soul, and he sees he must enter upon it the next hour? O then it will be amazing indeed? astonishing indeed! This one thing, Eternity, put infinite sweetness into Mercies; and infinite bitterness into Sufferings: The thoughts of this was that which did so much amaze that good Man, who sitting in a deep Muse a long time, and being asked the reason of it, was silent; and being asked again and again, at length broke out into these Words, *For ever, for ever, for ever, for ever*; and for near a quarter of an hour together spake nothing else: thereby telling them that asked him, that it was the thoughts

thoughts of this ſame *for ever*, that ſo much amuſed him. And if you were more in the thoughts of the weight of Eternity, you would ſee it were an aſtoniſhing thing indeed: And this is that which makes dying-work ſuch a weighty work, and a dying hour ſuch a difficult hour. I will cloſe this Head, and with that, this Demonſtration, with a ſaying I have read in one of the Ancients, *That is not to be accounted,* (ſays he) *an evil Death, which has had a good Life preceding it; nor doth any thing make Death terrible, but that which follows Death: therefore they which muſt neceſſarily die, are not much to concern themſelves what falls out to cauſe Death, but whither by Death they are conſtrained to go, whither Death carries them.* It is a great Saying, and indeed 'tis no great matter when we die, or how we die, or what is the occaſion of our Death: But it is whither Death carries us, and where Death ſets us down; whether in a bleſſed or wretched Eternity; whether with God or Devils; in Heaven or Hell? Well then, if Death be thus terrible in its own Nature; if in a dying hour the Devil be ſo fierce and terrible in his Aſſaults upon Souls; if Conſcience be ſo awakened and ſmart in its Charges and Accuſations; if then we muſt have to do with God immediately, and as our Judge, yea, as our Judge for Eternity, as one that will determine the Eternal Condition of our Souls, in unſpeakable Happyneſs, or unſpeakable Miſery; then ſurely dying work is a great work, and a dying hour is a difficult hour: It then greatly concerns us to have all ready, and all in order

in the matters of our Souls againſt the time thereof comes.

CHAP. III.

Which ſheweth the Glory, Sweetneſs and Bleſſedneſs of the attainment of having all things ſet right in the Matters of our Souls, before a dying hour comes, which will further evince the Truth aſſerted.

AS Dying Work is weighty Work, and a Dying Hour is a difficult Hour; ſo to have all things ſet right, all well ordered and compoſed in the matters of our Souls, againſt ſuch an hour comes, is an high, a ſweet, and bleſſed Attainment, an Attainment which carries infinite Sweetneſs and Deſirableneſs in it. A taſte of which I ſhall give you in two things only. (1.) Hereby we come to be glorious Conquerours over Death and the Grave. (2) Hereby we come to have abundant entrance miniſtred to us into Heaven and Glory. And my Beloved, what more ſweet and deſirable than this? Surely this ſpeaks it to be a very ſweet and bleſſed Attainment.

1. Hereby we come to be glorious Conquerors over Death and the Grave. Death is an Enemy, 'tis the laſt Enemy Children of God have to grapple and conflict with; *The laſt Enemy that is to be deſtroyed is Death*, 1 Cor. 15. 26. And being the laſt Enemy, in conquering this, they conquer all; conquering this,

this, they are compleat and eternal Conquerors. Now by having all things set right in the matters of our Souls, all things ready, and in order for a dying hour, we come to conquer this last Enemy; yea, to get a glorious conquest over it; Hereby *Death comes to be swallowed up in Victory*, as you have the expression, 1 Cor. 15. 54. Hereby *we are more than Conquerors over it*, Rom. 8. 37. Take the Conquest which this gives us over *Death*, in these three things.

1. Hereby the Soul is carried above the fear of *Death*: In *Heb.* 2. 15. we read of some, *who all their Life-time were subject to bondage through fear of Death*: And if in their Life-time, much more when they come to a dying hour; Then Conscience (as you have heard) is more awake: O the Fears, the Terrors, the Hell upon Earth, that the sight of *Death*'s approach fills many a poor soul withal! But now take a Soul that has all things right, and in order in his spiritual Concerns, and he is carryed above the fear of this King of Terrors; and that when made as terrible as the Wit and Malice of Man can possibly make it: He can converse with his last Enemy as one that hath lost his Sting and Power and so without the least fear or dismayedness of Spirit: *None of these things moves me*, says *Paul*; *neither count I my Life dear unto my self, that I may finish my course with joy.* His Afflictions did not move him, did not terrifie him. But if Death should come, what then? Why that shall be welcome too, saith he, *Acts* 20. 24.

Who is afraid of a conquered Enemy, an Enemy which a Man ſeeth dead and ſlain in the Field? One that has all things ready for a dying hour, he ſees Death to be a conquered Enemy, an Enemy conquered by the Death of Chriſt; and ſo is carried above the fear of it.

2. Hereby the Soul is enabled in a holy manner to triumph over Death, and even to ſcorn and contemn it; which is an higher Conqueſt ſtill. A man that has all things ſet right, and well ordered in the matters of his Soul, he is not only carried above the fear of Death, but he rides in triumph over it, as one that divideth the Spoil: He can then, with boldneſs and comfort, challenge this laſt Enemy of his, and even dare it to do his worſt to him: *O Death where is thy ſting? O Grave where is thy Victory?* (ſaith the Apoſtle.) *The Sting of Death is Sin, the ſtrength of Sin is the Law: But thanks be to God, who giveth us the Victory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Cor. 15. 55, 56, 57. As if he ſhould ſay, Death you talk of a ſting? but where is it? Grave, you would threaten us with Victory and Overthrow; but do your worſt, conquer us if you can. As a Man that has diſarmed his Enemy, thrown him upon his back, and ſays to him, Sir, where is your Sword? Where is your Piſtol? Where is the Execution you threatened? Do your worſt.

3. Hereby the Soul comes to be able ſolemnly to chuſe and deſire Death; yea, very much to exult and rejoyce in Death, as that which of an Enemy is become a Friend, and an Inlet into

into all Happineſs into him. So 2 *Cor.* 5.5,6,7,8. *Now he that hath wrought us for the ſelf-ſame thing, is God, who hath alſo given unto us the earneſt of his Spirit: Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilſt we are at home in the Body, we are abſent from the Lord; we are confident, I ſay, and willing rather to be abſent from the Body, and to be preſent with the Lord.* So *Phil.* 1. 22, 23. *But if I live in the Fleſh, this is the Fruit of my Labour; yet what I ſhall chuſe, I wot not; for I am in a ſtrait betwixt two, having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt, which is far better.*

Mark, He deſires *Death*, he chuſes *Death*, as that which is a Friend to him, and an Inlet into his happineſs. Such an one can ſay, as I have read a *German* Divine did, when dying; *I am ready* (ſays he) *and deſire to be gone out of this Life, in which all things are not only full of Miſeries and Calamities; but which is to be lamented, all things are full fraught with Sins: I ſay, I deſire to paſs into that Life in which there is no Sin, no Miſery.* Yea, more, ſuch an one can exult, and rejoyce in Death, *Luke* 2. 29, 30. *Lord now letteſt thou thy Servant depart in Peace, according to thy Word; for mine Eyes have ſeen thy Salvation.* They are words of joy and exultation in the ſight of *Death*'s approach. The Child of ſome tender and indulgent Father being abroad at ſojourn, and ſeeing a Meſſenger come from his Father to fetch him home; how does he exult and rejoyce? O (ſays he) my Father hath ſent for me home! Now I muſt go live with my Father, to eat and drink

at my Father's Table to live in my Father's presence, enjoy my Father's Love and Counsels! And this he rejoyces in, and exultingly embraces the Messenger. 'Tis the very case here, the Soul having all things ready, all things set right within, when Death comes, 'tis but as a Messenger to him, to fetch him home to his Father's House, which he can welcome and embrace with joy. O (says he) my Father has sent for me home, home to Heaven, there to live immediately in his Presence and upon his Fulness; and now shall I be for ever with my Father; now I shall for ever feast my Soul with my Father's Love, and the constant view of my Father's Face: Now I shall *see him Face to Face*, whom here I could never *see but through a Glass darkly*: Now I shall see and be for ever in the imbraces of my sweet Lord, that bled for me, that died for me, that *trod the Winepress alone for me*; now shall I enter into the *Glorious Liberty of the Children of God*: I have hitherto been in bondage to Satan, in bondage to my own Heart, which has all along wretchedly imposed upon me; but now I shall enter upon the Glorious Liberty of the Children of God: Now I shall *partake of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*: Now I shall bathe my Soul in the Christian Streams of undefiled Pleasures, running fresh along the Banks of Eternity at my Father's right Hand: Now I shall spend a whole Eternity in Praises, Doxologies, and Halleluja's to God and the Lamb: Now I shall have all my Spots and Wrinkles, my Sins and Sorrows done away at once: Now shall

ſhall I ſigh no more, and which is infinitely better, I ſhall ſin no more for ever; no more complain of dark Viſions, and ſhort viſits from God; no more complain of diſtances and alienation between him and my Soul for ever: There ſhall be no more interruption of Communion with my ſweet Saviour; but I ſhall ſtand in his Preſence, and behold his Face for ever more. In a word, hereby Death, the King of Terrors, becomes the King of Comforts to the Soul; and a Man comes to die both happily and Comfortably. Some Men die neither happily nor comfortably; and ſuch is the caſe of all that die out of Chriſt; they die in their Sins; they die to be damned for ever. Some die happily, but not comfortably; ſuch is the caſe of poor Chriſtians dying under deſertion, whoſe Sun ſets in a Cloud; they die in the dark, not knowing what ſhall become of their Souls to Eternity, which yet go ſafe to Heaven, being built upon the Rock of Ages, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. Some die both happily and comfortably; ſuch is the caſe of all thoſe who have all things ſet right between God and them, all things ready, and in order, before a dying hour comes. Some die preſumptuouſly, thinking all is right and well in the matters of their Souls, when indeed nothing is ſo; that is ſad for Eternity: The Lord deliver your Souls and mine from ſuch an *Exit*. Some die tremblingly or doubtingly, not knowing how things are with them, whether well or ill, but they fear ill, that is ſad, at leaſt for a time, The Lord carry us above ſuch an *Exit*. Some (*viz.* well ordered

dered Souls) die fiducially, knowing things to be right between God and them; and that is comfortable both for Time and Eternity. Well then, if hereby we come to have such a glorious Victory over Death and the Grave, it must then be a great Attainment to have all things in order between God and us, and consequently greatly our concern to have things so.

2. Hereby we come to have a rich and glorious entrance ministred to us into everlasting Life and Glory, into Heaven and Blessedness. As hereby we come to be glorious Conquerors over the natural Death: so hereby we come to have a rich and glorious Entrance ministred to us into the Eternal Life. Which also carries much sweetness and blessedness in it; 2 *Pet.* 1. 5, 11. *And besides this, giving all diligence: add to your* Faith *Virtue, and to Virtue Knowledge*, &c. That is, grow as compleat in Grace as possibly you can, make sure of your Salvation, make all ready in the matters of your Souls: and what then? *So an entrance shall be ministred to you abundantly into the Everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* And is not this a blessed Attainment? Take this in three things.

1. Hereby the Soul comes to enjoy much of Heaven here upon Earth; much of Blessedness and Glory, whilst on this side Blessedness and Glory; then hath a Man an abundant entrance ministred unto him into Heaven and Glory, when he hath much of Heaven and Glory given out to him here on Earth, large Earnest, and

First-fruits

Firſt-fruits: And this the Soul has, that hath all things right in the matters of his ſpiritual ſtate, all things ready and in order within. Hence we read ſometimes of the *Earneſt*, ſometimes of the *Firſt-fruits of the Spirit*, Eph. 1. 14. Rom. 8. 28. And the Soul that is moſt ready, has the greateſt Earneſt and Firſt-fruits; that is to ſay, the greateſt beginnings of Heaven here upon Earth: For that which makes us ready for a dying-hour, is ſomething of Heaven dropped into the Soul here.

2. Hereby he comes to go triumphantly from Earth to Heaven, to go to Heaven and Glory, with a Crown upon his Head; and is not this a ſweet Attainment? Then hath a Man an abundant entrance into Heaven and Glory, when he goes triumphantly thither: When a Man paſſes to Heaven and Glory, with Viſions thereof in his Eye, and Prelibations thereof in his Soul, with a clear Witneſs and Evidence in his Spirit that he is going to poſſeſs the fulneſs thereof with God and Chriſt for ever: When a Man enters into Life without any Rebukes from God, or his own Conſcience; without any ſtumbling through doubting or unbelief: This is the Happineſs of ſuch as have all things well in their Souls before a dying hour comes. It is with ſuch in Death, as it was with *John*, in a Viſion, *Rev.* 4. 1. They (as it were) hear a Voice from Heaven, ſaying, *Come up hither*, and immediately they are in the Spirit. Some poor Souls crowd into Heaven through a throng of doubts and unbelief, difficulties and deſpondencies, through many fears and temptations

rations; in ſo much that it might be truly ſaid of them, that they are *ſcarcely ſaved*, as the Apoſtle's expreſſion is; but others go through none of theſe; they go triumphantly, with a Crown upon their Heads, as it were. So *Paul*, 2 Tim. 4. 6, 7, 8. *I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand; I have fought a good Fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the Faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteouſneſs, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge ſhall give me at that Day; and not to me only, but unto all them alſo that love his Appearing.* Methinks I ſee how his Holy Soul went triumphantly to the Throne of God, and the Lamb. When *David and the Houſe of Iſrael, brought up the Ark of the Lord, it was with ſhouting, and with the ſound of the Trumpet*; So when ſuch a Soul goes to Reſt, 'tis with a kind of ſhouting and triumph amongſt the Saints themſelves, who all reach the ſame Heaven and Glory at laſt. There's a very great deal of difference in their Death and in their going to that Heaven and Glory. As you know, two Ships may arrive at the ſame Harbour, yet with much difference, as to the manner of their coming in: The one makes a ſhift to get in, but 'tis with her Anchors loſt, her Sails torn and rent, her Flags down, her Maſts broken, and the like: But the other comes in bravely, riding as it were in Triumph, with her Sails ſpread, her Anchors ſafe, her Flags flying, her Trumpets ſounding, and her Mariners ſhouting. So great a difference there is in the paſſing of Saints

to

to Heaven and Bleſſedneſs: Now what an Attainment muſt it be to go with Shouting and Triumph!

3. Hereby the Soul comes to be admitted to, and inveſted with an eminent fulneſs of Bleſſedneſs and Glory with God for ever. Then has a Man an abundant Entrance into Heaven and Glory, when he is admitted to, and inveſted with an eminent fulneſs of Glory and Bleſſedneſs in Heaven for ever; and this he hath who hath all right and ready in the Concerns of his Soul when he comes to die: ſuch an one receives a full Reward, as the Expreſſion is, 2 *Epiſt. John* 8. and *has much fruit abounding to his account*, Phil. 4. 7. And O what a ſweet and bleſſed Attainment does this ſpeak it to be, to have all in order againſt a Dying hour comes! Now if it be ſuch an Attainment to have things ſet right, and in order in our Souls againſt a Dying Hour, then ſurely it muſt needs be highly our Concern to have all things ſo.

CHAP. IV.

Which ſhews the ſtate of Men and Women under Death, as a further evidence of our Aſſertion

AS to have all things ready and in order when a dying Hour comes, is an high and glorious Attainment; ſo ſuch is the ſtate and Condition of Men and Women under Death, that

that it cannot but be highly their concern to have all things ſet right, all things ready in the matters of their Souls, when they come to die. This I will ſet before you in three Propoſitions.

First Propoſition is this, *That ſuch is the ſtate and Condition of Men and Women under Death, that there is no return for them into this Life any more for ever.* When once a Man's Sun is ſet, it never riſes more; when once a Man has his *Exit*, is gone off the Stage of this World, he never enters more; there is no more any Part to be Acted here by him. This you have in the Text, *Before I go hence and be no more*; that is, no more in this World. So *Job* 7. 7, 8, 9, 10. *O remember that my Life is Wind, my Eye ſhall no more ſee Good: The Eye of them that hath ſeen me, ſhall ſee me no more: Thine Eyes are upon me, and I am not. As the Cloud is conſumed and vaniſheth away; ſo he that goeth down to the Grave, ſhall come up no more. He ſhall return no more to his Houſe, and his Place ſhall know him no more.*

Again, Job 10. 20, 21. *Are not my Days few! Ceaſe then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little; before I go whence I ſhall not return, even into the Land of Darkneſs and the ſhadow of Death.* And again, Job 16. 22. *When a few Days are come, then ſhall I go the way whence I ſhall not return.* All ſhewing that when a Man is once gone off the Stage of this World, there is no return for him any more.

Second

Second Propoſition in this; *that ſuch is the State of Men and Women under Death, that there is nothing to be done for their Souls: There is nothing to be mended that is amiſs, nothing to be ſet in order that ſhall be found out of order.* Death (my Beloved) is not the time of working but of receiving the reward of our work: Death leaves us under an utter and eternal impoſſibility of ever doing any thing for an other World; Therefore *whatſoever thy Hand findeth to do,* (ſaith *Solomon*) *do it with all thy might; for there is no Work nor Counſel in the Grave whither thou goeſt,* Eccleſ. 9. 10. And *I muſt work the Works of him that ſent me, while it is day; becauſe the Night cometh, when no Man can work,* ſaith Chriſt, *John* 9. 4. Death is a ſtate of darkneſs, and deprives us of all helps, advantages and opportunities of ever doing any thing for the good of our Souls: There is no repenting, no believing, no turning to God in the Grave. There is no aſſuring pardon of Sin, no getting an Intereſt in Jeſus Chriſt; no making our Calling and Election ſure there: O no! Theſe things muſt be done now, or they can never be done; and if they be never done, our Souls are for ever undone. 'Twas an Epicurean ſaying of him, who ſaid, *Eat, Drink, Play; for after Death there is no Pleaſure:* But it would be a Chriſtian ſaying to ſay to you, and my own Soul, Love God, pray to him, ſeek his Face, repent, believe, make ſure of Chriſt; for after Death none of theſe are to be done: They muſt be done here, or never.

Third

Third Propoſition is this, *That ſuch is the ſtate of Men and Women under Death, that the Soul is actually and irreverſibly ſtated and concluded in its Eternal Condition: The Souls Eternal State is abſolutely fixed and unchangably determined, without any alteration for ever.* 'Tis an Obſervation among the School-men, that look what befel the Angels that ſinned, that in Death befalls wicked Men, thoſe that are not ready for a dying hour, The Angels immediately upon their ſinning, were ſtated in an irreverſible condition of Wo and Miſery: And wicked Men, unready Souls, immediately upon Death, are irreverſibly ſtated in a like eternal Condition; they are eternally ſealed up under Damnation. And the Devils may as ſoon get out of thoſe Chains of Eternal Darkneſs, whereinto they are caſt, and in which they are locked up, being reſerved unto Judgment; as ſuch Perſons can change or reverſe that Condition. The truth is, Death when-ever, or where-ever it comes, is as a determining thing, it concludes the Soul for ever under an unalterable ſtate of Life or Death, of Happineſs or Miſery; for, *as the Tree falls ſo it lies*, Eccl. 11. 3. Hence in Death, *the Spirit*, *the* Soul is ſaid *to return to God*, Eccleſ. 12. 7. Upon which a Learned Man has this Obſervation; *God* (ſaith he) *receives the Soul of Man, when he dies, to himſelf: and having received it, he delivers it either to the Holy Angels, that by them it might be carried to Heaven, if it hath been holy and good; or he delivers it to the evil Angels, by them to be dragged into Hell, if it hath*

been

been ungodly. Hence the Apoſtle tells us, *after Death comes Judgment*, Heb. 9. 27. By which is meant the particular Judgment of every Man and Woman immediately upon Death; which is nothing elſe but the ſtating of the Soul in an Eternal Condition. Hence alſo, when *Dives* is brought in, deſiring that *Lazarus* might *dip the tip of his Finger in Water to cool his Tongue*; anſwer is made, That it cannot be, for as much as there is no going for any, either from Hell to Heaven, or from Heaven to Hell, becauſe *there is a Gulf fixed*, Luk. 16. 26. Noteing the unalterableneſs of that ſtate which Death ſets Men down in, whether of Happineſs, or Miſery. Well then, if ſuch be the ſtate of Men and Women under Death, as we have heard, then ſurely 'tis highly our concernment to have all ready, all in order againſt a dying hour comes. Having given you thus briefly the Demonſtrations of the Point, I ſhall make ſome Practical Improvement of it.

CHAP. V.

Wherein Sinners are convinced of their Sin and Folly in the neglect of their Concern: With ſix weighty Pleas or Arguments, to ſet home this Conviction, and awaken them to their Work.

AND is this indeed a Concern of ſo much weight and moment to us? Then how great is their Folly and what Enemies are they

they to their own Souls, who live in the neglect of this great Buſineſs and Concern? (which the moſt of Men do.) God is pleaſed to ſpare, yea, wonderfully to ſpare them for Days, for Weeks, for Months, for Years together, and that for this very end, that they ſhould make themſelves ready, and ſet all right in the matters of their Souls, againſt a dying hour comes. But, woe and alas for them! This they mind not, this they concern not themſelves about, but inconſiderately live in a total neglect thereof, than which what greater Folly can they be guilty of? Pray mind what God himſelf ſpeaks in this caſe, *Deut.* 32. 28. 29. Where he ſaith concerning Iſrael, *They were a Nation void of Counſel, nor was there any underſtanding in them.* And what then? *O that they were wiſe, that they underſtood this: that they would conſider their later end.* Obſerve here two things atteſted and verified by God himſelf. (Firſt) That 'tis a point of the higheſt Wiſdom the Sons of Men are capable of, ſeriouſly to conſider their later end; that is, to prepare for Death, and to ſet all things right in the matters of their Souls, ſo as that things may iſſue well with them at laſt, and they may go off the Stage of this World with Comfort. (Secondly) That not to do this is a point of the greateſt Folly: It doth evidently argue Men to be void of Counſel, and all true Underſtanding: It would have been their Wiſdom to have conſidered their later end; and their not doing of it, argued them to be guilty of notorious Folly: Theſe things you may

ſee

ſee God himſelf atteſts and verifies here. And my Beloved, what greater Folly can there be, than for a Man to live in the neglect of that which is of ſo much weight and importance for him to mind, as this is? Surely the greater the concern is, the greater muſt our folly be in the neglect thereof: Yet this is the folly that the moſt of Men are guilty of; they mind not their later end, their dying hour; at leaſt not ſo, as to make a timely proviſion for it. God letteth them live many years, and perhaps they rejoyce in them all; but they forget the days of darkneſs, which are many: They regard not the ſtate of their Souls, nor how things ſtand between God and them in reference to another World; And O that this were not the folly of too many of us, who profeſs the belief of another Life, a future ſtate: *We live and enjoy good, but we put far from us the evil day*, as thoſe are ſaid to do, *Amos* 6. 3. God ſpares us time after time, but no proviſion do we make for a dying hour. O how many of us have never yet ſet any thing right in the matters of our Souls, any thing in order againſt the time comes when we are to go hence, and be no more; that have ſcarce ever had yet one ſerious Thought of Death, Judgment, or Eternity, nor made the leaſt tittle of Proviſion for them? And what ſhall I ſay to ſuch? I would (if God ſaw good) awaken them out of their folly, and convince them of it: In order to which, I would plead a little with them in five or ſix Particulars.

1. Muſt not we all go hence? *Solomon* tells us

us, *There is a time to be born and a time to die*, Eccleſ. 3. 2. And the one is as ſure as the other; as ſure as we have had a time to be born, ſo ſure we ſhall have a time to die, and the Living know it: *The Living know that they ſhall die*, (ſaith *Solomon*) Eccleſ. 9. 5. Indeed they may well know it: For not only the experience of between five and ſix thouſand years tell them ſo, but it is what is appointed, what is infallibly determined by the unchangable Law, and Decree of Heaven, *Heb.* 9. 27. Nor can any thing whatever exempt us from the ſtroke of Death.

1. Youthful Strength and Vigour can't do it: For young Men die as well as old; ſtrong Men die as well as weak. *One dieth in his full ſtrength* (ſaith the Holy Ghoſt) *being wholly at eaſe and quiet, his Breaſts are full of Milk, and his Bones are moiſtned with Marrow*, Job 21. 23, 24.

2. Worldly Pomp and Greatneſs can't do it: For Great Men die as well as Mean Men; Rich Men die as well as Poor Men. *Where is the Houſe of the Prince?* (ſaith the Holy Ghoſt.) Anſwer is made, *He ſhall be brought to the Grave, and ſhall remain in the Tomb; the Clods of the Valley ſhall be ſweet unto him, and every Man ſhall draw after him, as there is innumerable before him*, Job 21. 28, 32, 33. So in the 49 Pſal. 16, 17, 18, 19. *Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the Glory of his Houſe is increaſed: For when he dieth, he ſhall carry nothing away, his Glory ſhall not deſcend after him; though while he lived, he bleſſed his Soul,*

Soul, and the like, *he ſhall go to the Generation of his Fathers, he ſhall never ſee light.*

3. Humane Wiſdom and Policy can't do it; for Wiſe Men die as well as Fools, So *Pſal.* 49. 10. *Wiſe Men die; likewiſe the Fool*; yea, in many reſpects, *Wiſe Men die as the Fool*, Eccleſ. 2. 16. Pray what is become of all the Wiſe Men and great Politicians that have lived in former Ages? Truly the Clods of the Valley cover them.

4. Spiritual Gifts and Graces can't do it; for good Men die as well as bad; holy Men as well as wicked Men: *The righteous Man periſheth, and no Man layeth it to heart; and merciful Men are taken away*, Iſa. 57. 1.

5. Eminency of Place and Service can't do it; *Your Fathers, where are they? and the Prophets, do they live for ever?* Zech. 1. 5. What higher place, than to be a Prophet, to be an Ambaſſador from God? and yet ſuch die: Nothing (you ſee) can exempt us from the ſtroke of Death: Why then ſhould we neglect to prepare for it! I will cloſe this Head with a Saying I have read in one of the Ancients. *What among humane affairs*, ſays he, *is more certain than Death? What more uncertain than the hour of Death? Death compaſſionates not Poverty, neither doth it reverence Greatneſs; it ſpares no Sex, no Manners, no Age, only it ſeems to come in at the Gate upon old Men; but craftily it ſteals in upon young ones.*

2. Doth not Death haſten upon us all? As we muſt all die, ſo Death haſtens apace upon us; every ſtep we take is a ſtep towards Death

Death and the Grave. So we find, *Eccleſ.* 9. 10. *Our whole Life is* (as one well obſerves upon that place) *nothing elſe but a journey towards Death and the Grave*; whether we ſleep or wake, eat or drink, trade or travel, pray or play, we are ſtill haſtening to the Grave: A dying hour haſtens upon all; and how faſt (pray) does it haſten upon us? faſter than the Weavers Shuttle does to the end of the Web, *My days* (ſaith Job) *art ſwifter than a Weavers Shuttle*, Job 7. 6. How faſt does it haſten upon us? As faſt, yea faſter than a Poſt haſtens to the end of his Stage, or a ſwift Ship to the Harbour, under the advantage of Wind and Tide, or the ſwift flying Eagle to the Prey. *My days are ſwifter than a Poſt* (ſaith Job) *they flee away, they ſee no good: they are paſſed away as the ſwift Ship; as the Eagle haſteth to the Prey*, Job 9. 25, 26. How faſt does it haſten upon us? So faſt, as that, for ought we know, it will be upon us before we ſee the light of another day. *Thou fool, this Night thy Soul ſhall be required of thee*, Luke 10. 20 How faſt does it haſten upon us? So faſt as that for ought we know, it may be upon us the next hour, yea, the next moment: *They ſpend their days in Mirth, and in a moment go down to the Grave*, Job 21. 13. To be ſure it will be upon us ſpeedily, and it may be upon us ſuddenly. I pray conſider, what are we? and what is our Life? Wind: Job 7. 7. *O remember that my Life is Wind*: An Hands-breath, *Pſal.* 39. 5. *Behold thou haſt made my days as an Hands-breadth; mine Age is as nothing before thee.* A de-

declining ſhadow, *Pſal.* 102. 11. *My days are like a ſhadow that declineth, and I am withered like Graſs.* A Flower of the Field which is withered, and gone with the Wind: *As for Man, his days are as Graſs, as a Flower of the Field, the Wind paſſeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof knoweth it no more*, Pſal. 103, 15, 16. And again. *All Fleſh is Graſs, and the goodlineſs thereof as the Flower of the Field, the Graſs withereth, the Flower fadeth; becauſe the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: Surely the People is graſs*, Iſa. 40. 6. 7. Vanity and a ſhadow: *Man is like to Vanity, his days are as a ſhadow that paſſeth away*, Pſal. 144. 4. *A Vapour which appears for a little ſeaſon, and is gone*, Jam. 4. 14. O how ſoon may one, or another, or all of us, be among the Dead; How ſoon may Death approach us?

3. What infinite Mercy is it, that God hath ſpared us thus long, and ſtill does ſpare us to ſet all things right, to make all ready for a dying hour? O my Brethren, how great is the ſparing Mercy of God towards us! We have had ſome ten, ſome twenty, ſome thirty, ſome forty, ſome fifty, ſome ſixty Years in the World, and ſtill God ſpares us; ſtill he lets us live and enjoy good: And why all this, think you? Surely to ſet all things right in our Souls, to make ready for a dying hour, and ſhall we yet neglect it? God forbid; O Sirs, think a little, I beſeech you with your ſelves, How long ſince the Grave might have ſwallowed us up, and the bottomleſs Pit have ſhut its Mouth upon us? How long ſince, might Time

and

and days have been at an end with us and our Souls ſtated in a miſerable Eternity; But ſtill God ſpares us, and we are yet in the Land of the Living, with a Door of Mercy and Grace yet open unto us; at leaſt a poſſibility left us of knowing the things of our Peace in our day, of making Proviſion for Death and Eternity: And O what Mercy is this! I would fain a little quicken both you and my ſelf by this Conſideration: And in order thereunto let me plead a little particularly with you.

1. Conſider how long God hath ſpared, and does ſpare you, beyond what he does and has thouſands and ten thouſands of others: God does not ſpare all at that rate, which he has ſpared, and does ſtill ſpare us: Alas! How many thouſands are there now free among the Dead, who came into being long ſince we did? Their Glaſs is run, their Sun is ſet, their Day is over, their Hopes and Expectations are all at an end: Their Souls are ſtated in an Eternal Condition, a Condition that will admit of neither change nor period for ever; and yet we are ſpared ſtill: They came into the World long after us, and are gone into eternity long before us: Yea, how many are there, that never arrived to the one half of thoſe years that we have arrived unto? Their Sun hath ſet in the Morning: How many of us have out-lived our Yoke-fellows, our Children, our Servants, our Friends and Acquaintance? And yet we ſtand our ground; and all this that we might prepare for a dying hour. *This Patience of God ſhould*

ſhould lead to Repentance, Rom. 2. 5. And O that it might ſo do!

2. Conſider how much we have provoked God, and what advantage we have given him in Juſtice againſt us: I would ſay here, as Chriſt ſpeaks in another caſe, *Luke* 13. 2. *Suppoſe ye that thoſe* Galileans, (*whoſe Blood* Pilate *mingled with their Sacrifices*) *were Sinners above all the* Galileans, *becauſe they ſuffered ſuch things? I tell you, nay; but except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh; Or thoſe eighteen upon whom the Tower of* Shiloah *fell, and ſlew them; think ye they were Sinners above all Men that dwelt in* Jeruſalem? *I tell you nay; but except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh.* So ſay I here, Suppoſe ye that thoſe that are gone down to the gates of the Grave, and the bars of Death before us, were greater Sinners than we? I tell you, nay; *but except we repent we muſt all likewiſe periſh.* We have ſinned as well as they, and poſſibly in many regards more than they: To be ſure, we have all over and over deſerved long ſince to have been covered with the ſhadow of the Night of Eternal Darkneſs. O how hath the Patience of God been tried, and his Long-ſuffering put to it by us! What burden have we been to his Soul! Some of us have cauſe to think, that we have been as great a burden to God, as moſt that ever lived. How juſtly may the bleſſed God complain of many of us, *That we have made him to ſerve with our Sins, and wearied him with our Iniquities*, as he did them of old; *Iſa.* 43. 24. *That we have broke his Heart*

with our whoriſh Heart, whereby we have departed from him, Ezek. 6. 9. *That our Sins have preſſed him down, as a Cart is preſſed that is full of Sheaves*, Amos 2. 13. Alas, alas! How have we wallowed in our Pollutions, and acted out the Enmity and Rebellion of our Natures againſt him? How have we rejected his Word, reſiſted his Spirit, deſpiſed his Grace, trampled upon his Son, refuſed many and many an offer of Love, and many a ſweet Call, and bleſſed Invitation, to come to the Marriage-ſupper of the Lamb? and yet that he ſhould ſtill ſpare us: O what Mercy is this! In 1 *Pet.* 3. 20. We read, *That the long-ſuffering of God waited in the days of* Noah: And truly, my Beloved, it waits as much in our days, and our Provocations be as many and as high againſt him as theirs of that Generation were. O Sirs, why are we not in Hell? Why are we not ſealed and ſhut up among the Damned? Why have we one Call more, one Offer more, one Seaſon of Grace more? Verily 'tis all rich Mercy: O that it might lead us to Repentance!

3. Conſider how ſad it had been with us had the Lord taken that advantage againſt us which we have over and over given him. Suppoſe (my Beloved) God had not ſpared us; but had cut us off, as he might long ſince, what now had become of us? And where now had we been? Had you died of ſuch and ſuch a Sickneſs you have been in, when poſſibly a Sentence of Death was paſſed upon you, both by your ſelf and others, and there was really

really but a ſtep between Death and you, where and how miſerable had you now been? Had you not been now in the Flames, eternally ſeparated from God and Chriſt, being Godleſs and Chriſtleſs? Have you not now cauſe to fear you had been in as irrecoverable Condition as the Devils themſelves are in, ſealed up under Wrath and Condemnation, paſt all hopes and poſſibility of Mercy for ever? *Whither had I gone* (ſaith *Auſtin*) *if then* (ſpeaking of the time he was in his Sins) *I had gone hence? Whither had I gone but into the Flames, and into Eternal Torments, anſwerable to my Sins?* May not we ſay the like? But bleſſed be God, it is yet time and ſeaſon with me and you; we are ſpared to this hour, that we might provide for Death and Eternity. O Sirs, ſuppoſe you or I were now among the Damned; ſuppoſe we ware as they are, ſealed up under Wrath and ſeparated from God, left under an utter impoſſibility of ever ſeeing his Face; How ſad then would our condition be? Why, thus it might have been with us! O what Mercy is it then that God has ſpared us, and does ſpare us as he does? And how ſhould it awaken us to our Work?

4. Conſider, how much more ſad it may, and will yet be with us, in caſe we provide not for a dying hour. Truly, the longer God ſpares us, if we anſwer not his end in his ſparing Mercy, the more miſerable ſhall we be for ever. It will be ſad to periſh at all; but it will be doubly ſad to periſh under the long-ſuffering of God, under the abuſe of much good-

neſs, and long patience: O to have many days and many years patience and goodneſs come in to witneſs againſt a Man at laſt; How ſad will this be? Think of, and ſeriouſly lay to heart that Scripture, *Rom.* 2. 4, 5. *Deſpiſeſt thou the riches of his goodneſs, and forbearance, and long-ſuffering, not knowing that the goodneſs of God leadeth thee to Repentance? But after thy hardneſs and impenitent heart, treaſureſt up to thy ſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath, and Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God.* Every day which God in his patience affords us, if we be not led to Repentance, is a day of treaſuring up wrath, heaping up to our ſelves wrath againſt the day of wrath, when wrath ſhall come upon us to the utmoſt. Well, think then what a Mercy it is, that God ſpares you as he does; and what an Obligation this ſparing mercy of his is upon you, to ſet all things right in the matters of your Souls againſt a dying hour comes.

4. Are you ſure that thoſe helps and advantages which now you enjoy to further you in your work, will always laſt and be enjoyed by you? Suppoſe, my Beloved, that God ſhould yet ſpare you, and prolong your days in the Land of the Living: Yet O how ſoon may all your Helps and Advantages to further you in this great work, be withdrawn from you! Now, bleſſed be God, you enjoy many bleſſed helps and advantages for your furtherance in this great work, but how quickly may they all be gone!

1. How ſoon may the Reproofs, the Counſels,

ſels, the holy Examples of your Godly Friends, Miniſters and Relations, be withdrawn from you? Now you enjoy the loving Reproofs, the wholeſome Counſels, the holy Examples of ſuch and ſuch Friends and Relations; one reproves you for Sin, another quickens you to Duty; one dehorts you from the World and Carnal Pleaſures; another perſwades you to cloſe with Chriſt, and walk with God, to purſue after Heaven and Eternal Life; one woos and beſeeches you, another charges and commands you to labour and know God, and to live to him, to provide for another Life, and they all ſhew you the path of Life, they tread the way to Heaven in your ſight: All which are great helps and advantages to further you in this great Concern of yours. But how ſoon may all theſe be withdrawn? Thy Friends, thy Miniſters, thy Relations will ſpeedily be lodged in the Duſt, and thou ſhalt never have a word of reproof, a word of Counſel, a word of Quickning, a word of Encouragement, or a pattern of Faith and Holineſs ſet before thee, by them any more for ever; which would be a dreadful thing. Now the Godly Father, Mother, Yoke-fellow, Maſter, Friend, and Acquaintance, is plying thee with Counſels and Inſtructions, for the good of thy Soul; to Morrow it may be, he or ſhe goes down to the Gates of the Grave; and then no more of this for ever.

2. How ſoon may the Word and Ordinances of God, which you now enjoy, be withdrawn from you? Now you enjoy the Word

and Ordinances of God: You go from Ordinance to Ordinance; you have *Line upon Line, Precept upon Precept*, as it is *Isa.* 28. 10. Yea, let me tell you, *you see and hear these things, which many Prophets and Righteous Men have desired to see and hear, but saw and heard them not*, Mat. 13. 16. O how is *Light and Immortality brought to light* to you! How is the way of Salvation made plain and manifest before you! What Glorious Discoveries! What blessed Revelations! What sweet and frequent tenders of Christ are made to you! How freely are you *called to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb*! How lovingly doth Christ invite you to himself! How kindly does he stand knocking at the Door of your Souls! O (my Beloved) I may now say to you, as *Paul* to the *Corinthians*, 2 Cor. 6. 2. *Behold! Now is the accepted time, now is the day of Salvation*, O what helps and advantages are these! But how soon may they all be gone? How soon may the word of God be withdrawn? How soon may your Light be put out, and your Souls left in Darkness, not knowing whither to go? Remember that word of Christ, and lay it to Heart, *John* 12. 35. *Yet a little while is the Light with you; walk while you have the Light, lest Darkness come upon you; and he that walketh in Darkness, knoweth not whither he goeth. While you have the Light, believe in the Light, that you may be the Children of the Light.* It is a great question, whether we may not lose Gospel-Ordinances and all; and where are we then?

3. How

3. How ſoon may the motions and ſtrivings of the Spirit of God be withdrawn from you? Now you have the motions and ſtrivings of the Spirit of God in you, and with you; *he moves upon the face of the Water* in your Souls; he moves and ſtrives in and by the Word and Ordinances, Mercies and Afflictions; now you have enlightning, and then you have quickning Influences from him. Now he ſhews you your Work, and then he tenders you his Aſſiſtance; now he diſcovers the odiouſneſs of Sin to you, and then he diſplays the Beauty, Sweetneſs and Excellency of Chriſt and Holineſs before you: But Alas! How ſoon may all this be at an end? Think of that Terrible word, *Gen.* 6. 3. *My Spirit ſhall not always ſtrive with Man.* God may poſſibly the next day, yea, the next hour, ſay to his Spirit concerning one or another of us, Let him alone, ſtrive no more with him, move no more in him, convince him no more; perſwade him no more, draw and allure him no more; he is addicted to his Luſts, and to this World, let him alone: he has no mind to Heaven, no deſire to make any proviſions for another World, let him alone; he is unwilling to ſee beyond Time to Eternity, he is given to his Carnal Pleaſures, let him alone; he has a reſiſting, gain-ſaying Spirit, let him alone. O how ſoon theſe, and all other helps and advantages you now enjoy, may be withdrawn, who knows? You have all theſe together in one Scripture which I deſire you to lay to Heart, Luke 19. 41. 42, *When he was come near, he beheld the*

City (ſpeaking of *Jeruſalem*) *and wept over it, ſaying, If thou hadſt known even thou, at leaſt in this thy day, the things which belong to thy Peace; but now they are hid from thine Eyes.* They had a day, wherein they did enjoy the things of their Peace; they might and ſhould have improved their Day, and the things of their Peace, by ſecuring their Eternal State: But they neglected it, and now all theſe are withdrawn from them; which cauſed the Lord of Glory, the Joy of the whole Earth, to weep over them; ſo woful miſerable, and deplorable he ſaw their condition to be: And how ſad will it be with you, if once Chriſt ſhould come to ſay over you that diſmal word, *Now they are hid from your Eyes*!

5. Is it an eaſie matter (think you) to ſet things right in your Souls, and to make all things ready for a dying hour? Suppoſe (my Beloved) that you ſhould live yet many days, and withal, your helps and advantages for the good of your Souls ſhonld be continued to you: Yet, is it an eaſie work which you have to do? And ſhall you have time and days to ſpare? Believe it, Sirs, all will be little enough to ſet things right, to make things ready for a dying hour. Pray conſider with me theſe few things as to this.

1. Conſider in what a woful diſorder all things are at preſent with you, and how utterly unready for a dying hour: I will give you the Scripture-ſtate of your caſe; You are *dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins*, under whole Loads and Mountains of Scarlet Crimſon Guilt; *without Chriſt*

Chriſt, without Hope, without God in the World, alienated, and Enemies in your Minds, by wicked Works ; yea, Enmity it ſelf againſt God and Chriſt ; full of ſin, both within and without, nothing but Sin, having no good dwelling in you ; void of all Grace, all true ſpiritual Life ; under the power and predominancy of Luſt ; *ſerving divers Luſts and Pleaſures, and carried captive by the Devil at his Will* : Cloſely glued to, and deeply in love with this World ; ignorant of God, and of the great Myſtery of the Father, and of Chriſt ; at leaſt having no ſaving knowledge of them ; no ſavour of Heaven, no reliſh of ſpiritual things in your Souls ; wallowing in your Blood and Gore, being *filthy and abominable, to every good Work reprobate* : the Heart ſtrongly averſe from God and all Good, and vigorouſly bent to Sin and Vanity : Nothing of Heaven within ; but full of Hell, full of the Spirit and Image of the Devil ; under the Law of Sin, ſtrangers to the Law of Grace ; no union with Chriſt, no Oil in the Veſſel ; *poor, miſerable, blind and naked* ; at moſt, *having but the Form, and denying the Power of Godlineſs.* This is your Condition : O what Diſorders are theſe ! and what an unready poſture are you in for Death and Eternity !

2. Conſider how great a thing it is to be ready for Death, ready indeed, and to have all things ſet right, and in order, againſt a dying hour comes ; and how much is requiſite in order thereunto. 'Tis a great ſaying of an holy Man ; *no one* (ſaith he) *can joyfully welcome Death, but he that has been long compoſing*

his Spirit, and making ready for it. O my Beloved, to be indeed ready to quit the World, to go into the Divine Presence, the Great, the Holy, the Glorious Presence of God, to be ready to enter upon the Beatifical Vision, to possess a Mansion in the Father's House, to joyn with an Heavenly Host of Angels, and Spirits of just Men made perfect, in Eternal Praising, Admiring, and Adoring of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: Believe it, this is a great thing, and great things are requisite thereunto. This calls for a near Union with Christ, a firm Peace with God, clear Evidences for Heaven: for much Grace and Holiness, much Heavenliness and Spirituality of Mind, much Weanedness from this World, much holy Deadness to Sin, Self, and the Creature; much Victory over Corruption; much Soul-cleansing; much purity of Heart and Affection; much Diligence and Faithfulness in Duties: And (my Beloved) are these little things, or things easily to be accomplished and attained unto? O Sirs! the Scripture, speaking of these things, calls upon us to *strive*, Luke 13. 24. *to give all diligence* in the pursuit of them, 2 *Pet.* 1. 5, 10. To manage and dispatch *them with Fear and trembling*, Phil. 2. 12. All which tells us that they are great things, and not easily to be accomplished and attained unto: Therefore we had need look after this, and neglect no longer.

3. Consider, what Lets and Hindrances, Difficulties and Oppositions you must expect to meet withal in your minding and managing this

this Work; not only is the Work it ſelf great, but you muſt alſo expect many Lets and Hindrances, much Difficulty and Oppoſition in the managing of it: You muſt expect Lets and Oppoſitions from the Devil, he is the Enemy of Souls: And you muſt expect that he will make uſe of all his Wiles, Methods and Devices, all his Craft and Cunning, all his Artifices; and that he will ſtir up all his Wrath and Malice againſt you: He is your Enemy, and a ſubtile, potent, indefatigable Enemy, an Enemy *that always goes about ſeeking whom he may devour*, 1 Pet. 5. 8. You muſt expect Lets and Oppoſitions from the World too, from the Men of the World, from the Things of the World, from the Smiles of the World, from the Frowns of the World. The World is your Enemy as well as the Devil: So much is intimated, 1 *John* 5. 4. And you muſt expect oppoſition from it: The Men of the World will diſcourage you; the Things of the World will divert you; the Troubles of the World will mightily depreſs you; the Enjoyments of the World will miſerably enſnare and entangle you; The World is of a marvellous bewitching, enſnaring and entangling Nature: It is indeed oppoſite to God and all Goodneſs, and ſo to the whole Intereſt of our Souls. *The Friendſhip of the World is Enmity to God*, James 1. 4. The World will plead for, and take up your Time, your Strength, your Thoughts, O the hindrance that the World is to thouſands, and ten thouſands, in the Work of their Souls; truly this ruins multitudes for ever:

This

This ruin'd him we read of *Mat.* 19. 32. And ſaith *Paul*, Demas *hath forſaken us, having embraced this preſent World*, 2 Tim. 4. 10.

You muſt expect Lets and Hindrances alſo from your own Hearts; yea, from them above all others: *The Heart* (the holy Ghoſt tells us) *is deceitful above all things, and deſperately wicked*, &c. *Jer.* 17. 9. And who of us does at all obſerve it, and the workings of it, does not find it to be ſo? Now it will openly oppoſe you, then it will ſecretly ſeduce and enſnare you: Now it will carry you off, and draw you back from God and Duty, *Heb.* 3. 12. Then it will turn you aſide to Sin and Vanity, *Iſa.* 44. 20. Now it will divert you from Duty; then it will make you dead and ſloathful in Duty: 'Tis indeed wholly ſet againſt all that is good; and it hath a thouſand ways to hinder you in your great Work; and you muſt expect that it will do its utmoſt to hinder you. This is a cloſe Enemy, it is always at hand; there is no end of its oppoſition, till Life it ſelf ends. One of the Ancients (I remember) breaks out into a ſad Exclamation againſt his own Heart, thus: *My Heart* (ſaith he) *is a wicked Heart, a vain Heart, a roving a wandring Heart: My mind is exceeding light, wonderful inconſtant, a Vagabond, and a Fugitive; it changes it ſelf into all ſhapes; it will, and it will not; 'tis like a Leaf moved and carried about with the Wind. My vain and importunate Heart hales me now to the Market, and then to Strifes and Brawlings; now to Feaſting, and then to impure Luſts; now the Fleſh is inflamed with*

ſordi-

ſordid Titillations, then the Mind is defiled with filthy Cogitations. And who of us may not make the ſame complaint? Yea, ſuch is the Enmity and Oppoſitions of our own Hearts againſt Heaven, and the things of Heaven, that many times when we moſt reſolve and ſet our ſelves to follow God, and to purſue the work of our Souls, then they ſet us moſt back. It was a great ſpeech of that ſame Father: *This* (ſaith he) *is my daily exerciſe; with my whole ſtrength I bend to thee, and would mount up to God add Heaven, but by how much the more ſtrongly I endeavour to come up to thee, by ſo much the more powerfully I am caſt into the Earth, into my ſelf, and even under my ſelf, captivated to my Luſts.*

And ſo it is often with us: Lets then, and Oppoſitions muſt be expected by us on all hands; and we had need therefore the more to awaken to our Work. 'Tis true, if you will engage in good earneſt in the Work of your Souls, your Helps and encouragements will be greater than your Lets and Diſcouragements, you will have more with you than againſt you: You will have God with you, and Chriſt with you, and the Comforter with you, and all the Graces of the Covenant with you; be encouraged therefore to ſet upon Soul-work. Now lay all theſe things together, and ſee if it be an eaſie matter to make ready for a dying hour; and if it be not, why ſhould we neglect? why ſhould we delay any longer?

6. How terrible will Death be to you! And what a dreadful change will it make with you,

you, in case you still neglect to make ready for it! Suppose (my Beloved) you go on in the neglect of this great Concern, *putting far from you the evil day*; What (think you) will the issue of it be; Will not Death be most terrible to you, when you shall be called to conflict with it? Will it not make a dreadful change with you? Surely it will. Death to an unready Soul, what will it be? It will be the period of all his Mercies, of all his Comforts, of all his Hopes: For such an one receives all his Good things in this Life before Death comes, *Luke* 16. 25. It will be the sending of him to his own Place, the cutting him down as Fewel for everlasting Burnings: It will (be as a worthy Divine speaks) *As the taking up of a draw-bridge, and the pulling down of the Flood-gate of God's Eternal Wrath, to let in the Deluge of it upon his Soul for ever*: It will be a change to him: but what Change will it be? surely a very sad one.

1. A Change from Earth to Hell; and is not this a sad Change? *The Wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all that forget God.* Psal. 19. 17. And we read of the *rich Man* (who was unready for Death) *that being dead he was in Hell*, Luke 22. 23.

2. A Change from Light to Darkness: And is not that a sad Change? The Holy Ghost speaking of such an one, tells us, *God shall drive him out of the Light into Darkness, and chase him out of the World*, John 18. 18. Here wicked Men enjoy the Light of Creature-Comforts, but God will drive them out of these, into the Dark-

Darkneſs of Eternal Miſery, into *utter Darkneſs*, Mat. 25. 30, into *blackneſs of Darkneſs* Jude 13.

3. A Change from Pleaſure to Pain, from Delight to Torment; a ſad Change it is, from Pleaſure and Delight in Sin, to Pain and Torment for Sin, *Luke* 16.23. Here the Soul ſports himſelf in the Pleaſures and Delights of Sin, and he thinks he can never have enough; but then there will be an end of all thoſe Pleaſures and Delights, and nothing but Pain, Torment, and Vexation will ſucceed them.

4. A Change from the Offers of Grace, to the Revelation of Wrath: *Shall thy loving kindneſs be declared in the Grave, or thy faithfulneſs in Deſtruction?* (ſaith the Pſalmiſt) in that 88 *Pſal.* 11. True, in 1 *Pet.* 3. 19, 20. we read of *Chriſt's preaching by the Spirit to the Spirits in Priſon*; that is, to Souls in Hell: But mark, when was it that he preached to them? not when in Priſon, but in the days of *Noah*, when they lived in the World. There is never an offer of Grace and Love made to Souls in the Grave; while Life laſts, the Soul hears the joyful ſound: And O the ſweet Offers, the gracious Tenders, the loving Invitations that are made to him in Chriſt, of Grace, of eternal Life and Love! O the wooings, the meltings, the intreatings, the alluring of Divine Love to and over the Soul! But when Death comes, farewel all theſe; farewel all the ſweet Offers of Chriſt, and all the bleſſed motions of the Spirit; then there's nothing but Wrath revealed, and Wrath ſhall come

come on the neglected Soul of the uttermoſt.

5. A Change from fair probabilities to utter Impoſſibilities of Life and Salvation; a ſad change ſtill: *Now is the accepted time, now is the day of Salvation*; now, and not hereafter, 2 *Cor.* 6. 2. Now there is a fair probability for the worſt of Sinners to be ſaved, if they will look after Salvation, and mind their eternal Concerns; Chriſt is both able and willing to ſave: To ſave was the end of his coming into the World, and of all he did and ſuffered here, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. Now they are beſought and entreated to be reconciled to God, 2 *Cor.* 5. 19, 20. but when Death comes, that changes theſe fair probabilities into utter Impoſſibilities of Life and Salvation. Therefore mark: *Now* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *is the day of Salvation*; that is, now whilſt Life laſts, and while the Goſpel is preached,

6. A Change from Hope to Deſpair; a ſad change indeed. We read, that *the Hope of the Hypocrite ſhall periſh*, Job 8. 13. and that *the expectation of the Wicked ſhall periſh*, Prov. 10. 28. Whether Men be open Sinners, or cloſe Hypocrites, their hopes at laſt ſhall all fail, and turn to deſpair, deſpair of ever ſeeing God, or enjoying the leaſt tittle or *iota* of Good for ever.

Thus Death will be terrible to you, and make a dreadful change with you, in caſe you neglect to make ready for its coming; twill affright you, as bad as the Hand-writing upon the Wall did that proud King, *Dan.* 5. 5, 6.

Which

Which made his Countenance change, his thoughts to trouble him, and the Joynts of his Loins to be loosed, and his Knees to smite one against another. O when Death comes, and thou shalt be found unready, how will thy Countenance change, thy Joynts be loosed, thy Thoughts troubled, and thy Heart tremble within thee? In a word, I will say to you, as the Prophet spake of old, *Isa.* 10. 3. *What will you do in the day of Visitation? and whither will you flee for help?* When Death comes, what will you do? Which way will you look? Will there be any hope, any help, any refuge for your Souls to flee unto? Alas! there will be none. Wilt thou then run to the Mercies of God, and cry, Lord, Lord? Alas! it will be in vain; he will say unto you, *Depart from me, I know you not*, Mat. 25. 11, 12. Wilt thou then labour to get Grace and Pardon? Alas! it will be too late; then the *Door will be shut* against thee, *Mat.* 25. 10. Wilt thou then desire others to spare thee some of their Oil? Alas! That will be a vain thing; they will tell thee, they have but enough for themselves, *Mat.* 25, 9. Wilt thou then plead thy Gifts, Parts, and Services for Christ? Alas! it will be to no purpose, unless thou hast done the main Work; notwithstanding all thy Gifts and Services, he will send thee away with the workers of Iniquity, *Mat.* 7. 22, 23. Wilt thou call upon the Rocks and Mountains to cover thee, and hide thee from the wrath of him that sits upon the Throne? Alas! it will be in vain *Rev.* 6. *latter end.* O Sinner! When thou

shalt

ſhalt ſee thy ſelf launching out into the great Ocean of Eternity; and God, ſhall as it were, ſay to thee, by the Mouth of thy own Conſcience; Well now, Time and Days are at an end with you, and will never dawn more; what haſt thou done for thy Soul? What Proviſion haſt thou made for another World? Is Chriſt thine? Haſt thou gotten thy Sins pardoned, and the like? When it ſhall be thus (I ſay) what wilt thou then do, and whither wilt thou then look? How wilt thou then cry out, *Undone, undone, I am loſt for ever! My days are ended, and my Work is ſtill to do! Wo is me, what a God, a Chriſt, a Heaven, a Bleſſedneſs, a Glory, have I wilfully and fooliſhly loſt?* Truly thou, and ſuch as thou, are the only Perſons whoſe Death will be truly lamentable. I remember a ſaying I have read in one of the Ancients; *They* (ſaith he) *are to be bewailed in their Death, whom the Devils drag away to the Torments of the Infernal Pit, not they whom the holy Angels do conduct to the Joys of Paradiſe; They are to be bewailed, who after Death are by the Devils turned into Hell; and not they, who by the Angels are placed or ſet down in Heaven.* O that theſe things might convince you of your folly, and awaken your Souls; and that ſo, as yet to know the things of your Peace in your day, and the time of your Viſitation.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Being a Call to all, Good and Bad, Saints and Sinners, to addreſs themſelves to the great Work of making all ready for a dying hour.

WHat is the Language of all this? Verily it calls aloud upon all, Good and Bad, Saints and Sinners, to make it our great Buſineſs to ſet all things right in the matters of our Souls, and make all ready for a dying hour: And O that we would make this improvement of this great Truth, and of God's ſparing Goodneſs to us! He ſpares us, and why does he ſpare us, but that we ſhould ſet all things right, and make all things ready? O that we would now fall in with the End and Deſign of God herein, making it our great Care and Buſineſs in Time to provide for Eternity, in Life to make ready for Death. Some of you, I verily believe, are about this Work, and the Lord proſper you in it: You know you were born for Eternity, and you do endeavour to live for Eternity; Your great Work in time is to make proviſion for a bleſſed Eternity. O happy Souls that you are! Others of us, and thoſe, by far the moſt (I fear) are utterly negligent in this Buſineſs; Death and Eternity are little minded by us; but we are in a ſleepy, drowſie, ſecure Spirit, and to ſuch (methinks) this Truth ſpeaks in a Language much like to that of the Ship-Maſter to *Jonah*, Chap. 1. 6. *What meaneſt thou*

O ſleeeper? Ariſe and call upon thy God, if ſo be he will think on us, that we periſh not. So what mean you, O you ſleepy, drowſy, ſecure Souls! Ariſe, make ready for a dying Hour; ſet all things right, all things in order in your ſpiritual Concernments, leſt Death come upon you unawares, and you be loſt for ever; and to ſuch of us I would ſay, as ſometimes God did by the Prophet to *Hezekiah*, Iſa. 38. 1. *Set thine Houſe in order, for thou ſhalt die, and not live.* So I ſay to you, ſet your Hearts in order, your ſpiritual Concerns in order; make all even between God and you, for you ſhall ſhortly die, and not live; you ſhall ſhortly go hence and be no more. And why ſhould we not all do ſo? If you be to change your Condition in the World, how careful and ſolicitous are you to have all things ready and in order for that Change? Why (my Beloved) you are ſhortly to paſs under that great and laſt Change; a Change from Time to Eternity; and will you have no care, no ſolicitude to make ready for that Change? If you are to take a Journey, though but a few Miles, or to make a Voyage into a ſtrange Land; O how are you concerned to have all things ready, all things in a prepared poſture, in order thereunto? And (my Beloved) ſhould not you be more concerned to make ready for your great Journey, your laſt and great Voyage? You are making a Journey, a Voyage out of Time into Eternity; you are juſt launching forth into the great Ocean: And what, nothing in order, nothing ready, nothing

thing ſet right in order thereunto? That is ſtrange! If you have ſome great Buſineſs, a Buſineſs of more than ordinary importance to be done, or a Suit at Law to be tryed or determined? O how cloſe do you follow it? And how careful are you to have all things ready in order thereunto? And (my Beloved) ſhould you not be as careful and diligent to prepare, and ſet all things right for the great Buſineſs of your Souls in another World? Have you any Buſineſs, any Concern of greater importance to you, than the Concern of your Souls, and Eternity? If you are to appear before ſome Earthly Judge, eſpecially if it be about a matter that concerns your Life; O how thoughtful are you to have all things ready and in order, in reference thereunto? And (my Beloved) ſhould you not be as thoughtful and ſolicitous to make all ready and to ſet all right, in order to your appearing before the Judge of all the Earth; and that about a matter which concerns the Life of your Souls, about a matter of Eternal Life and Death. Well what ſhall I ſay? Will you ſet about this great Buſineſs, this great Concern? Or, is it all one with you, whether you live or die, are ſaved, or Damned to Eternity? God yet ſpares you, bleſſed be his name; will you not ſet all right, before you go hence and be no more? Sinners will you ſet about this great Buſineſs? Your work is wholly yet to do; though, it may be, your Day is far ſpent, your Glaſs is almoſt run, your Sun near ſetting, and all your work to do. Oh *'tis high time*

time for you to awake out of ſleep; unleſs you mean to ſleep the ſleep of Eternal Death. Saints, will you ſet about this great Buſineſs, while God ſpares you? You have done ſomewhat, but there is much more yet to be done; there is much out of order yet in your Souls: Grace weak, (it may be) Corruption ſtrong, Peace broken, Evidences blurr'd and blotted, Unbelief powerful within you, the Heart much eſtranged from God; little ſuitableneſs to Heaven in your Spirits, and the like; Will you now labour to *recover ſtrength*? How many of us may complain, as that holy Man (St. *Bernard*) once did? *I am aſhamed to live, becauſe I am ſo unprofitable; and I am afraid to die, becauſe I am ſo unprepared.* Surely this Truth concerns the beſt of us all: and if we underſtand our ſelves, we cannot but know it; the Lord help us to know it effectually. And if after all, you would indeed addreſs to this great Work and Buſineſs, then I have ſeveral great and weighty Directions to propound to you for your help therein, of which ſome more general, ſome more particular, and I would ſpeak of each diſtinctly.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Wherein are propounded ſeveral general Directions, in order to a through preparation of Soul for a dying hour.

1. WOuld you indeed ſet all things right in your Souls, make all ready for a dying hour? Then in your moſt proſperous and flouriſhing State here maintain a frequent and ſerious remembrance of Death and the Grave, upon your Spirits. *If a Man live many Years* (ſaith Solomon) *and rejoyce in them all; yet let them remember the days of Darkneſs, for they are many* Eccles. 11. 8. By the days of Darkneſs here, we are to underſtand Death, and the State of Death; the abode of our Bodies in the Grave, which is *a Land of Darkneſs, and where the Light is as Darkneſs,* Job 10 20. Now, ſaith he, though a man live many Years, and rejoyce in them all; that is, *though a Man live long and proſperouſly, long and joyfully*; yet let him remember Death and the Grave, the future State. 'Tis true, there are other Days of Darkneſs, which we are ſubject to in this World, and ſhould be remembred by us: Days of outward Darkneſs, the Darkneſs of outward Trouble and Affliction; and Days of inward Darkneſs, the Darkneſs of Spiritual Diſtreſs and Dereliction; and indeed 'tis of marvellous uſe to us in our Proſperity to remember theſe days of Darkneſs; but eſpecially we ſhould remember Death and the Grave

Grave: We ſhould carry a living remembrance of theſe Days of Darkneſs daily upon us; and indeed our not remembring theſe Days of Darkneſs is one great Cauſe why we are ſo unready for Death, and the Grave, as we are. When we are in the midſt of our Enjoyments, and the ſtreams run pleaſantly about us, we are too apt to forget theſe Days of Darkneſs; we are ſo taken with our Earthly Comforts, that we are loth to think of Death and Eternity, *putting far from us the evil Day*; as thoſe in their Enjoyments did, *Amos* 6. 3. And therefore when theſe Days come, they find us ſo unready, and our Spiritual Concernments ſo diſcompoſed as uſually they do. But (my Beloved) as ever you would have all right and in order in your poor Souls againſt a dying hour comes, let me recommend this to you as one ſpecial Help; Maintain a deep and frequent remembrance of Death and the Grave upon your Spirits; remember the days of Darkneſs, and that eſpecially theſe two Ways.

1. Remember them ſo as to have them much in your Meditation: Be much and frequent in the Contemplation of Death and the Grave. This the Holy Ghoſt calls a *Conſidering our later End*; and withal, mentions as a Buſineſs of great importance to us, *Deut.* 32. 29. To conſider, is to revolve a thing in our Minds, and to keep it much in our Thoughts and Meditations. And thus we ſhould conſider our later End, and remember the days of Darkneſs: This is that the Saints

of

of old have been much converſant in; they were much and frequent in the Thoughts and Meditations of Death: As I might inſtance in the good old Patriarchs *Job*, *David*, and others: And 'tis what does marvellouſly conduce to our preparation for it. *The meditation of Death* (ſaith one) *is Life*; it is that which greatly promotes our ſpiritual Life; therefore walk much among the Tombs, and converſe much and frequently with the Thoughts of a dying hour.

2. Remember them ſo, as to have them daily in your expectation. In the midſt of all your Enjoyments, expect Death's approach daily: This is called *a waiting for our Change. All the Days of my appointed Time, will I wait till my change comes*, Job 14. 14. And we are commanded *to wait for the coming of our Lord*; as that which lies in the directeſt tendency to the exacteſt readineſs and preparation for his coming, *Luke* 12. 36. *Expect Death every hour* (ſaith one) *for 'tis every hour approaching thee: In the Morning when thou riſeſt, think with thy ſelf, this may be the laſt day: in the Evening, when thou lieſt down, think with thy ſelf, this may be the laſt night I may ever have in this World. I know not when my Lord will come, whether in the Morning, or in the Evening, at Midnight, or at the Cock-crowing: Therefore I will be always expecting his coming.* Wo and alas for us! we are apt to talk of many years yet to come, as he did, *Luke* 12. 9. whereas we ſhould live in the expectation of Death every moment. Thus let us conſider the days of Dark-

neſs, it will marvellouſly conduce to the preparation of the Soul for them: The meditation and expectation of Death will conduce much (among others) to theſe four things:

1. It will conduce much to our humbling and ſelf-debaſing: *Let a Man own himſelf to be a Mortal* (ſaith *Auſtin*) *and Pride will, it muſt down.* And *think frequently of Death*, (ſaith another) and thou *wilt eaſily bring down thy proud Heart.* Hence alſo the Conſideration of Death is often in Scripture mentioned by the Holy Ghoſt, as an Argument to make us humble; *Duſt thou art, and unto Duſt thou ſhalt return*, Gen. 3. 19. as elſewhere.

2. It will conduce much to the weaning of our Hearts from this World, and the looſning of them from the things here below: *The time is ſhort* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *What then? Why it remaineth, that they that have Wives, be as though they had none; and thoſe that weep, as though they wept not; and thoſe that rejoyce, as though they rejoyced not; thoſe that buy, as though they poſſeſſed not; and they that uſe this World, as not abuſing it; for the faſhion of this World paſſeth away*, 1 Cor. 7. 29, 30, 31. He mentions the ſhortneſs of time, as that the meditation and expectation whereof, has the directeſt tendency in it, to wean and looſen the Heart from all things here below. And indeed (as St. *Bernard* hath it) *he eaſily contemns all things, who looks upon himſelf as dying daily.*

3. It will conduce much to engaging the Heart to Heaven, and the things of Heaven,

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to a ſerious purſuit of a bleſſed Eternity. So we find, Heb. 11. 13. &c. *Theſe all dyed in the Faith* (ſaith the Apoſtle) *not having received the Promiſes; but having ſeen them afar off, and were perſwaded of them, and embraced them; and confeſſed, that they were Strangers and Pilgrims on the Earth*; that is, they were apprehenſive they had but a little time to ſtay here: And what then? *They deſire a better Country*, that is, *an Heavenly*: The Apprehenſion they had of their departure hence, quickned them unto earneſt deſires and purſuits after the better Country, the Heavenly Land; and indeed one great reaſon why we breath no more, and preſs no more after Heaven, and a bleſſed Eternity, is, becauſe we ſo ſeldom remember theſe days of Darkneſs.

4. It will conduce much to the quickning of the Heart to Duty, and to Diligence and Faithfulneſs therein. Chriſt himſelf made uſe of it for this End: *I muſt work the Works of him that ſent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can Work*, John 9. 4. *Peter* alſo that holy Apoſtle made uſe of it to that end: *I will not be negligent* (ſaith he) to do ſo and ſo in the way of my Duty, *as knowing that ſhortly I ſhall put off this Tabernacle*, 2 *Pet.* 1. 12, 13, 14. The conſideration of the near approach of his Death quickned him to his Work and Duty. And the Scripture propounds it, as that which has a tendency to this thing: *Whatſoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy Might* (ſaith Solomon;) *for there is no Work nor Counſel in the Grave, whither thou*

art going, Eccleſ. 9. 10. He propounds the Conſideration of our going to the Grave, as a means to quicken us to our preſent Work. By all which we ſee, how much the ſerious remembrance of the days of Darkneſs muſt needs contribute to our readineſs and preparedneſs for theſe Days: Therefore be much in this Work. For my own part, I have hardly found any one thing more quickning and engaging upon my Spirit than this; And Souls, I would beg you, as you would live for ever, think often of Death.

2. Would you indeed ſet all things right in your Souls, and make all ready for a dying hour? Then be not fond of long Life here in this World; but rather covet to live as much as poſſibly in a little time. I would ſpeak of each diſtinctly.

1. Be not fond of long Life here in this World. A fond hope and deſire of long Life here, is one of the greateſt Enemies to a true preparation of Soul for our departure hence. For pray obſerve, take a Man that is fond of long Life here, and all his Thoughts and Projects are for this World: He is wholly taken up about, and carried out after the concerns of Time, ſcarce allowing himſelf one ſerious Thought for Death and Eternity: A ſad inſtance you have hereof in this rich Man, *Luke* 12. 19. He reckoned upon many Years, upon a long Life here; and what are the things he is taken up about? Verily the things of this World only, the increaſe of his Goods, and where to ſtore his Treaſures. Fond hopes and

and desires of long Life here, will certainly produce great Delays, if not utter Neglects, in the great Work and Concern of our Souls and Eternity. As ever therefore you would have all right and well in the Concerns of your Souls when you come to die, be not fond of long Life here, but sit as loose in your Thoughts, Hopes, and Desires, both of this Life, and all the Enjoyments of it, as possibly you can. And indeed (my Beloved) to reason it a little with you, why should you be fond of long life here? Why should you covet a long stay in this World? I would only plead with you in two things as to this:

1. What is this World, and what have we here, that we should here covet a long stay? Is this World such a sweet, such an amiable, such a desirable thing? It is an angry World, a frowning, a dirty, a bewitching, ensnaring World: 'Tis a Waste, howling Wilderness, a strange Land, an House of Bondage, a troublesome tempestuous Sea, an *Aceldama*, a Field of Blood; such I am sure 'tis oftentimes to the poor Saints and People of God; and what have we here? Why, here we have *Fears within, and Fightings without, Troubles on every side*, and from all hands; from Friends, from Enemies, from Men, from Devils; here we have Sorrow, Snares, Losses, Wounds, Deaths, Dangers, Temptations, Seductions, Disappointments, *vexation of Spirit*: And truly, little else is to be expected by us here, except that which is worse than all this, (*viz.*) daily raisings and ebullitions of Lust, violent eruptions

of Corruptions, great aboundings of Sin and Iniquity, both in our ſelves and others: continual breakings with God, and departings from him, renewing and encreaſing Sin and Guilt daily. Indeed this World is full of Sin, and Temptation to Sin: 'Tis (as *Auſtin* ſays) *tota Tentatio*, all Temptation; and as 'tis all Temptation, ſo 'tis little elſe but Sin: and why ſhould we covet a long ſtay here? *Why* (ſays one of the Antients) *ſhould we ſo much deſire that Life, in which, by how much the longer we live, by ſo much the more we ſin; and the more numerous our days are, the more numerous will our ſins be?* Who would deſire to ſtay long in a Priſon, or a Dungeon, in a ſtate and place of Sin and Sorrow? And ſuch is this World.

2. Is there not a better Life, a better place, a better ſtate for our Souls to long and aſpire after? What do you think of the Life above, a whole Eternity ſpent in the Divine Preſence, in the boſom of Divine Love, a Life of *Love*, a Life of *Pleaſure*, a Life of *Joy*, a Life of *Admiration*, a Life of *Holineſs*, perfect and unſpotted Holineſs, a Life every way correſpondent to the Divine Life, and the Divine Will? Is not this a better Life? *To be with Chriſt is beſt of all*, Phil. 1. 23. To poſſeſs a manſion in our Father's houſe, prepared by our Lord, and Head, Jeſus Chriſt, for us; to live for ever in the viſion and fruition of Father, Son, and Spirit; to dwell in the heavenly City, where no unclean thing can enter; to joyn in with the glorious Hoſt of Saints and Angels above, and with them to ſpend a whole Eternity

ty in Songs of Praiſes and Hallelujahs to God, and the Lamb; to take up all our Waters at the Fountain-head; and indeed to drive and bath unchangeably in the Fountain of all Delights at the Father's right hand: O how ſweet is this Life! And how much to be deſired by us! In a word (my Beloved) the Saints, when in the beſt frame, have many of them been ſo far from being fond of long Life here, that indeed they have thought it long till the time came, when they ſhould go hence and be no more, crying out with an holy impatience, *Why is his Chariot ſo long a coming? Why tarry the Wheels of his Chariot?*

2. Covet to live much in a little time. 'Tis ſaid of the Reverend and worthy Divine, Dr. *Preſton*, that he deſired to, and accordingly did, live much in a little time. And our Lord himſelf (you know) did not live long in this World; but he lived much in a little time; he did much Work in a few days for God and Souls. And indeed (my Beloved) 'tis not a long Life, but a fruitful Life, that is moſt amiable, moſt deſirable, and moſt like his Life, who is Life it ſelf. 'Tis not he that lives many Years, but he that lives much in a few Years, that is the moſt happy Soul. I know thoſe, whoſe Ambition it is not to live long, but to live fruitfully, and to do as much as poſſibly they can in a little time. And might they have their Opinion or Choice, it would be this, To live much in a little time; and then have their diſmiſſion to reſt. And (my Beloved) let this be your Choice, and your Am-

bition; be casting about in your selves, how you may live much in a little time; how you may compass much spiritual Work and Business in a few days; Labour to treasure up much Grace, much Experience of God and his Love; to bring a large Revenue of Glory to him, and the like. And for this end possess your Souls with a deep sense of the exceeding worth and preciousness of Time; and accordingly set your selves to redeem it, looking upon the loss thereof to be the greatest loss in the World. *Ephes.* 5. 16. we are commanded to *redeem the time*; and what is it to redeem the Time, but to esteem Time as precious, as a thing of incomparable Worth and Value; and accordingly to make the best and highest Improvement of it for the Honour of God, and good of our Souls, that possibly we can? It is to fill up our Time with Duty, and our Duties with Grace; to make use of Time for those ends, for which Time is given us; not to eat, and drink, and solace our selves in the Creature, but to serve and honour the Creator! *to work out our Salvation*; to get acquaintance with God and Christ; to make sure of Heaven and a blessed Eternity. O Sirs! look upon Time as precious; so indeed it is: Time is the most weighty and momentous thing in the World: 'Tis that which our Eternal ALL depends upon: According as we do, or do not manage or improve our Time well, so will it go with us for ever. 'Tis a sweet Meditation which I have read in a Discourse of an holy Man: *This Life* (saith he) *of ours is most swift*;

ſwift; and yet in it eternal Life is either gotten or loſt for ever. This Life of ours is moſt miſerable; and yet in it eternal Happineſs is either gotten or loſt for ever. No leſs than a whole Eternity of Happineſs or Miſery, Salvation or Damnation, depends upon our uſe and management of our little time here in this World. *As the tree falls ſo it lies,* Eccleſ. 11. 3. As it is with us when we go out of time, ſo it will be with us to all eternity; and this we ſhould be much in the thoughts of, accounting therefore the loſs of time to be the greateſt loſs. 'Tis a weighty ſaying, which I have read in one of the Ancients, *It is a great and heavy loſs indeed* (ſaith he) *when we neither do good nor think good* (and let me add, nor get good) *but we ſuffer our hearts to wander abroad about vain and unprofitable things; and yet it is too difficult to reſtrain or keep them back from theſe things:* Truly, no loſs like the loſs of Time; the loſs of Eſtate, the loſs of Trade, the loſs of this or the other outward comfort, is nothing to the loſs of Time. Theſe being loſt, may be recovered again; but Time being loſt, can never be recovered more. Accordingly ſet your ſelves to redeem it, and do it as much as poſſibly you can, accounting that day loſt, wherein you have not done ſomething for God and your Souls. The truth is, we live no more than we are converſant in the Work of God and our Souls: For as for that which we call Life, that is not ſpent in this Work, it is not indeed to be accounted Life.

Thirdly, Would you, indeed ſet all things

right in your Souls, make all ready for a dying hour? Then think much and often with your ſelves, how great a Change Death will make with you when ever it comes. Death is a Change, and in many reſpects the greateſt Change which the Sons of Men are to paſs through, *All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my Change come*, Job 14. 14. *Job* had many Changes, and great Changes: *Changes and War were upon him*, as he complained, *Job* 10. 16. But no change like this of Death, this was the great Change, and this he waited for all his days. Indeed Death is a great Change to every Man and Woman, come when or how it will; 'tis that (as you have heard) that deprives Men of all their Enjoyments here; which diſſolves the union between Soul and Body; which turns the body to Duſt and Putrefaction; and (which is unſpeakably more than this) it is that through which the Soul enters into the immediate Preſence of God, and ſtates it in Eternity; it is a Change from Time to Eternity, from Works to Rewards, a Reward ſuitable to the work we have here been doing, whether it be good or evil; and is not this a great Change? Take a few hints in particular about it, to ſhew the greatneſs of it.

Firſt, It is ſuch a Change, as all other Changes upon the outward Man are but leading and introductory unto, and into which at laſt they all iſſue, and reſolve themſelves. We paſs through many Changes here in this World. We may ſay as *Job*, *Changes and War are upon us*. But theſe are but leading and preliminary,

nary, as it were, to this laſt and great Change; theſe all are, or ſhould be to us, Monitors of this laſt Change, and do but a little darkly ſhadow it out unto us.

Secondly, It is ſuch a Change as calls for great ſpiritual Changes to paſs upon us here, to fit and prepare us for it; a Change in our Minds, a Change in our Wills, a Change in our Affections, a Change in our Converſation, a Change in our whole Man; a real Change a through Change, an univerſal Change: *Old things muſt be done away, and all things muſt become new*, 2 Cor. 5. 17. The Mind muſt be changed from Darkneſs to Light, from Ignorance to Knowledge in ſpiritual Things: The Will muſt be changed from Enmity to Subjection, from Rebellion to Obedience to God and his Laws; the Affections muſt be changed from Earthineſs to Heavenlineſs, from Carnality to Spirituality; the Converſation muſt be changed from Sin to Holineſs; from Vanity and Looſneſs, to ſtrictneſs and ſeriouſneſs in walking with God. O how great muſt that Change be, that calls for ſo many, and ſo great Changes, to fit and prepare us for it?

Thirdly, It is ſuch a Change, as tho' it do not put us out of being, yet it puts us into a quite other manner of being than ever we yet had; a Change which ſets us naked before the Tribunal of God, to receive a definitive Sentence of Life or Death from him; a Change which brings us into the immediate ſight of God, either as a gracious Father, or as a revenging Judge;

Judge ; a Change which fully opens the Eyes of the Soul, and makes him to ſee both Grace and Sin, Heaven and Hell ; Grace in its Amiableneſs, Sin in its Odiouſneſs ; Heaven in its Glory, and Hell in its Horror ; For (my Beloved) whatever we are, whether Good or Bad, Saints or Sinners ; yet when we die, our Eyes will be fully opened, to ſee theſe things ; we ſhall ſee unutterable things ; if we be good, we ſhall ſee them with Joy and Exultation ; if we be bad, we ſhall ſee them with Anguiſh and Confuſion of Soul.

Fourthly, it is ſuch a Change, as makes us capable of, and actually puts us into unſpeakably greater things, either of Happineſs or Miſery, Comfort or Confuſion, than ever here we knew, or were capable of ; a Change, which in one moment, in the twinkling of an eye, carries the Soul from ſmall firſt-fruits to the full Vintage ; from a few drops to a bottomleſs, boundleſs Ocean of either Happineſs or Vengeance, Delight or Torment. And withal there leaves him without any poſſibility of change or alteration for ever, but that of its re-union with the Body ; for its ſuch a Change, as leaves the ſtate of the Soul for ever unchangeable. O then, think much and often with your ſelves, how great a Change Death will make with you ! Certainly, did Men think and conſider with themſelves, how great a Change Death will make with them when it comes, they would not leave the matters of their ſouls in ſuch diſorder and diſcompoſure, in ſuch an unready poſture for it as they do.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, would you indeed ſet all right in your Souls, and make all ready for a dying hour? Then preſently ſet upon Soul-work, without admitting of the leaſt delay or procraſtination upon any account whatſoever: Delays and procraſtinations in the work of our Souls and Eternity, is the high-way to Death and Ruin. What was it that ruined the foolish Virgins, but their delays in this great Work, and their neglect of the great Concerns of their Souls, till it was too late to mind them? *Mat.* 25. *begin.* *Felix* alſo was in a fair way, and had a fair oppertunity before him, to have provided for another World; but he delayed, and his delay (for ought we know) was his ruin, *Acts* 22. 25. Truly the Heart is very apt to delay and procraſtinate Soul-work: It is apt to cry out, To morrow, to morrow. Hence it is that the Scripture calls ſo often upon us for a ſpeedy engaging in the work of our Souls; the Scripture ſaith, *Now and to day, now is the accepted time, now is the day of Salvation*, 2 Cor. 6. 2. And *to day if you will hear his Voice, harden not your Hearts*, Heb. 3. 7, 8. And if the Scripture ſaith, *Now*, Why ſhouldſt thou talk of hereafter? If the Scripture ſaith to *day*, why ſhouldſt thou talk of to morrow? *Auſtin* confeſſeth this, and withal tells us, there is ſcarce any end of delays, if once we give way to them: *I delayed* (ſaith he) *to be converted to God, and put off my living to him from day to day.* And elſewhere he tells us, that when God called upon him to awake to his Work, he returned nothing but a

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few ſleepy words; *Anon, Lord,* (ſaith he) *Anon; bear with me a little: But this Anon and Anon had no end; and this, bear with me a little, went on a long way.* Take heed of this, this hath been the ruin of thouſands, and ten Thouſands: How many hath been convinced that it is their Duty, and Intereſt both, to fall in with the Work of God and their Souls, to make preparation for another World? But they have put it off till hereafter, and ſatisfied their Conſciences with Revolutions hereafter to do ſo and ſo; and have thus loſt their ſeaſon: Oh fall preſently without delay upon Soul-work: and to quicken you a little hereunto, conſider four things.

Firſt, Conſider the unreaſonableneſs of Delays; no juſt Plea can be made, nor true Account given, why you ſhould delay your Soul-work one moment: The Devil and a Man's own Heart will make many Pleas, but no juſt Plea can be made; they will tell you it is too ſoon, you are young, and have time enough before you, what need you engage ſo ſoon? But is this a rational Plea? Is it too ſoon to be ſaved, too ſoon to be happy, too ſoon to ſecure yonr eternal Intereſt? Is it too ſoon to lay hold on Eternal Life? Is it too ſoon to know and enjoy God? Is it too ſoon to be out of danger of periſhing eternally? Why truly it cannot be too ſoon for theſe things; beſides, God calls for thy Youth, *Remember thy Creator in the days of thy Youth,* Eccleſ. 12. 1. And he greatly values the kindneſs of thy Youth, *Jer.* 2. 2. Again, they will ſuggeſt, that ſuch and

ſuch

ſuch a Buſineſs muſt be diſpatched, ſuch a Work done and carried off your hands, and then you may attend this Work; *Lord* (ſaith he to *Chriſt*) *I will follow thee; but ſuffer me firſt to go and bury my Father.* And ſaith another, *Lord, I will follow thee; but firſt let me go and bid them farewell which are at home*, Luke 9. 57. 61. But Friends, let me ask you, if there be any buſineſs to be diſpatched like the buſineſs of your Souls, and Eternity? Is there any thing upon your hand, that is of ſo much worth as your Souls, and of ſo much weight as Eternity? Is there any thing you are ſo nearly concerned to mind, as that which is indeed the one thing neceſſary, even the ſaving of your Souls? Oh! The whole world is nothing to this, and the greateſt concernments on Earth are but trifles to this Concern. Again, they will tell you it is an inconvenient Seaſon, and hereafter the Work may be better done and minded by you, than now it can; which was *Felix's* caſe in the place before mentioned, *Acts* 24. 25. But hearken, Soul, art thou ſure of another Seaſon? And art thou ſure that that will be a more convenient Seaſon? Surely no: If it be not convenient to day, thou may'ſt fear it will be leſs convenient to morrow; that Devil and deceitful Heart that tells thee it is not convenient now, will make proviſion that it ſhall be leſs convenient hereafter. O therefore break through all theſe Pleas, and fall ſpeedily upon Soul-work.

Secondly, Conſider the danger of Delays: Delays in this caſe are exceeding dangerous; one

one day's, yea (for any thing I know) one hour's delay herein, may prove thine Eternal undoing! it may prove the loſs of Chriſt, the loſs of Heaven, and the loſs of thy Soul, and all for ever. Alas! Art thou ſure thou ſhalt live one day, one hour more in this World? For ought thou knoweſt, the next moment thou goeſt down to the Grave, *Job* 21. 13. But in caſe thou ſhouldeſt live longer in the World, art thou ſure the Goſpel and the means of Grace ſhall be continued to thee? If thou ſhouldſt not be taken from the World, yet the Goſpel may be taken from thee; though the day of thy life may laſt a while longer, yet the day of Goſpel Grace and Mercy, may ſuddenly expire; and if that be once gone, all the Tenders of Chriſt, all the Offers of Grace, all the Exhibitions of Life and Salvation are gone; if the Goſpel be once gone, thy Seaſon is gone, and thy Soul is gone, and thy Salvation is gone, and that for ever; therefore ſaith the Apoſtle, *Now is the accepted time*, ſpeaking of the Day of Goſpel-Mercy, *Now is the day of Salvation*, 2 Cor. 6. 2. Or, grant thou ſhouldſt live, and the Goſpel ſhould be continued to thee, as to the outward means; yet art thou ſure that the day and ſeaſon of Grace will laſt any longer than this preſent moment? Remember that ſad word which the Lord breathed out with Tears in his Eyes, over neglecting *Jeruſalem*, Luke 19. 43. *O that thou hadſt known, at leaſt in this thy Day, the things that belong to thy Peace! but now they are hid from thine Eyes.* Alas! how ſoon may God withdraw

withdraw his ſpirit from thee? How ſoon may he call home his grieved Spirit from thy neglecting, reſiſting Soul, once for all, ſaying, My Spirit ſhall ſtrive no more with that Man? *Gen.* 6. 3. How ſoon may God ſeal thee up under judicial blindneſs and hardneſs of Heart, ſo that thou ſhalt never be able to believe or to do any thing for the good of thy Soul, in order to another World? Thou talkeſt of to morrow, and of hereafter; but who knows, but that before to morrow, God may clap the Seal of an hard Heart, and a blind Mind upon thee? So as that tho' thou ſhouldſt live a thouſand Years, and withal enjoy the faireſt means that ever any Soul enjoyed; yet thou ſhouldſt be never able to believe or repent, to do any thing for the working out of thy Salvation. It is oftentimes his way of proceeding with neglecting, delaying ones, *Iſa.* 6. 10. *Job* 11. 39, 40. Oh how ſoon may the Oath of God go forth againſt thee? Thou talkeſt of to morrow; but alas! who knows but that before to morrow, *God may ſwear in his wrath, thou ſhalt not enter into his reſt?* It is what is threatned againſt ſuch as will not hear his Voice to day, but harden their Hearts againſt him, *Heb.* 3. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. There is a time when God's Oath goes forth againſt Souls, and ſuch and ſuch Sinners, for their contempt and neglect of *Chriſt* and *Grace*; a time not only when God ſaith, but ſweareth, and that in Wrath, that they ſhould never enter into his Reſt; and if once God's Oath is gone out againſt a Man, that Man is paſt recovery;

covery; then farewel *Chriſt*, and Heaven, and Soul, and all for ever. O how dangerous are delays! Therefore take heed of them, and fall preſently upon Soul-work.

Thirdly, Conſider the diſadvantage of delays: Delays herein are diſadvantageous, as well as dangerous. Indeed, were there no danger in them (I mean as to the Eternal State) yet the diſadvantage of them is ſo great, as if rightly conſidered, might be enough to antidote the Soul againſt them, and engage it preſently in the work which relates to another World. Pray conſider it a little; by Delays the Soul loſeth much ſweet Communion with Chriſt, and many a bleſſed Communication of Love from him, which he might enjoy. The ſooner we fall upon the Work of Heaven and Eternity, the ſooner we come to a taſte and beginning of Heaven, and a bleſſed Eternity in our Souls: O the ſweet Embraces, the bleſſed Diſcoveries, the glorious Incomes of Love and Delight that the Soul loſes by his Delays to get into *Chriſt*, and to walk with *God*, and to mind eternal Concernments! Poor Soul, by thy Delays thou haſt lived upon Husks and Swill all thy Days hitherto, whereas thou mighteſt have eaten Bread in thy Father's Houſe, and drunk Wine new in thy Father's Kingdom: Thou haſt lived on the muddy, dungy, droſſie delights of Sin and the Creature, whereas thou mighteſt have ſolaced and delighted thy Soul with thoſe chriſtal ſtreams of undefiled Pleaſures, which are at Chriſt's and his Father's right hand. Beſides, by Delays,

lays, the Work of thy Soul grows more difficult; hereby Corruption grows more ſtrong, and the Heart grows more hard: By every days delay, the old enmity ſtrengthens it ſelf, and the Soul is more and more ſettled upon its Lees. For accuſtomedneſs in ſinning, hardens the Heart in Sin, as is hinted *Jer.* 13. 23. Every day the Soul is more alienated from Chriſt, and hardned againſt him. At beſt, if thy Soul doth at laſt come to ſee its need of Chriſt, and deſireth to cloſe with him, and to mind the Work and Concerns of another World; yet the longer thou delayeſt this Buſineſs, the greater Temptations thou wilt have to get over: for, though now thy Heart ſaith it is too ſoon, yet after a few days delay, it will ſay it is too late; it will be apt to conclude, that now thy day is over, and now Chriſt will have nothing to do with thee: O why ſhouldſt thou be ſuch an Enemy to thy own Soul, as to run it upon theſe diſadvantages? Rather avoid them by falling preſently upon Soul-work.

Fourthly, Conſider the ſinfulneſs of Delays, and the horrible guilt they bring upon the Soul: As Delays are dangerous and diſadvantageous, ſo they are ſinful too, exceeding ſinful, and provoking to the God of Heaven. The Truth is, were there no danger in them, no diſadvantage by them to the Soul; yet the ſinfulneſs of them is ſuch, as ſhould make us afraid of them: In every days delay to mind, and purſue Soul-work, there is poſitive Rebellion and Diſobedience to the Will and Command

mand of God : For the Command is, *To day if you will hear his Voice, harden not your hearts*, Heb. 3. 7, 8. By delaying therefore, thou rebelleſt againſt the Commandment. In every days delay to mind and purſue Soul-work, there is horrible unkindneſs and ingratitude to God and Chriſt ; which ſurely is a black Sin and brings great Guilt upon the Soul. God ſpares you time after time, when he might caſt you off the next moment. And this he doth, that you may purſue the work of your Souls and Eternity ; and O what unkindneſs, what ingratitude muſt it be in us to neglect, and put off this Work ? In every delay to mind and purſue Soul-work, there is much contempt of Chriſt and Grace ; and this is that which makes it be exceeding ſinful ; Chriſt offers himſelf and his Grace to you, he offers you Life, he offers you Peace, he offers you Pardon, he offers you Righteouſneſs, he offers you Strength, he offers you all the Treaſures of Heaven ; and withal calls upon you to accept theſe offers, and to take home theſe things to your ſelves ; but you by your Delays, pour contempt upon all ; you in effect ſay, neither Chriſt, nor his Grace, nor the purchaſe of his Blood, are worth minding, worth looking after. O what contempt is this ? and what Sin is this ? By delays you do in effect ſay, there is ſomething better than Chriſt, and ſomething of greater concernment to you than Salvation by Chriſt ; you plainly ſay that indeed you will have Chriſt hereafter, and Salvation hereafter ; but for the preſent you had much

much rather have your Luſts and Worldly Pleaſures. Oh! tremble at the thoughts of this, and let it affright you out of your delays, and put you immediately upon Soul-work. In a word, never any pretended that they minded the Concerns of their Soul, Union with Chriſt, walking with God, making ſure their Calling and Election too ſoon; many have repented that they have minded theſe things ſo late. I remember a bitter Complaint of *Auſtin* in his Book of Confeſſions, *I have loved thee too late*, ſaith he, *O thou ſo Ancient, and yet ſo new a Beauty, I have loved thee too late.* He bewails that he had ſo long laid out his Love upon the Creature, and not given Chriſt his Love. Could you ask all the Saints in Heaven, whether ever they repented that they minded the Work of Chriſt, and their Souls too ſoon? They would tell you no, they repented of nothing but that they minded it ſo late. Once more therefore let me call upon you, to fall immediately upon Soul-work, and never reſt till thy heart cries out to God as *Auſtin* did, when God had really ſhewed him himſelf, and made him ſenſible of his Sins; *When God*, ſaith he, *had ſhewed me my Sins and Miſery, there aroſe a great ſtorm within me, which carried with it a great ſhower of Tears; and indeed, I let looſe the Reins to Tears, crying out to God in ſuch words as theſe; O Lord, how long, how long wilt thou be angry? How long ſhall it be ſaid, to morrow, and to morrow? Wherefore may it not be now? Why may there not an end be put to my Sin and Filthineſs this very*

very hour? And indeed, God made that very ſeaſon, the ſeaſon of his Converſion: So labour to ſee thy Sin and Miſery ſo far, as thou mayſt cry out with a holy reſtleſneſs to God, How long ſhall it be to morrow, and to morrow? Why may it not be turned to thee now? Why may not my Soul be engaged in the work of Heaven and Eternity now?

Fifthly, Would you indeed ſet all right in your Souls, and make all ready for a dying hour? Then be much and importunate with God in Prayer, to teach you ſo to number your days, as to apply your Hearts to Wiſdom: This I ground upon *Pſalm* 90. 12. where *Moſes* the Man of God is found in this practiſe. *Lord* (ſaith he) *teach us to number our days, that we may apply our Hearts unto Wiſdom. To number our days, is not to number them in an Arithmetical, but a Spiritual way: it is not to caſt up how many days the Life of Man conſiſts of; that is eaſily done; but it is ſpiritually and practically to conſider, and lay to heart, the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of our lives, together with the various Miſeries and Calamities that do attend them.* So *Mollerus*. It is ſeriouſly and fiducially to contemplate the vanity of Life, as ſhort and uncertain, and as attended with Sorrows, Miſeries and innumerable Troubles, and to apply thy Heart to Wiſdom: 'Tis to make Religion, and the work of a Man's Soul, his main buſineſs; it is to make it his great buſineſs, and endeavour to get an intereſt in God and Chriſt, in the Covenant of Grace and Eternal Life; and in time

time to provide for, and make ſure of a bleſſed Eternity; it is to ſet a Man's whole Soul to the work of God, and his own Salvation. Now, as ever you would indeed make ready for a dying hour, beg of God to teach you thus to number your days, and thus to apply your Hearts to Wiſdom. There are two things I would obſerve, and ſo cloſe this.

Firſt, That ſuch a numbring of our days is what the beſt of Saints need, and may make great uſe of. *Moſes* was a very holy Man, and he looked upon it as a work uſeful, and of great importance to him to contemplate the vanity of Life, and to think of the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of his abode here; the moſt holy Souls need this; the moſt holy Souls need humbling, they need weaning from this World, they need quickning unto Duty, they need to have their Hearts awakned, to mind Heaven and a future Life; and the right numbring of our days, is that which greatly conduceth thereunto.

Secondly, Obſerve, That as this is a work needful and uſeful for the beſt of Saints to be employed in; ſo it is a work above their own Strength, and that which they need Divine Aſſiſtance to enable them unto. *Moſes* was an eminently holy Man, and yet as he ſaw he had need of this, ſo he ſaw it was a work above his Power; and therefore he goes to God, and puts in himſelf among the reſt, and prays for his teaching herein. Let us do ſo likewiſe, let us lie much at the foot of *God* for his teachings,

ings, whereby we may be enabled ſo to number our days as thus to apply our Hearts unto Wiſdom; beg him to make us ſee the vanity and uncertainty of our Lives, and that ſo as effectually to engage us to make out after a better Life.

CHAP. VIII.

Wherein more particular Helps and Directions are laid down, in order to the ſetting of things right, and making all ready for a dying hour.

BUT I would come nearer this great Buſineſs, and give you ſome more particular Directions, in order to your making all ready for a dying hour. And,

Firſt, Would you indeed have all things right in the matters of your Souls for a dying hour? then get into Chriſt, get Union with Chriſt, and an Intereſt in Chriſt by believing. Union with Chriſt and an Intereſt in Chriſt, is moſt requiſite and neceſſary to fit and prepare us for a dying hour; and without we have it, we can have nothing ſet right, nothing in order, nothing in readineſs for that hour. You know how the Scripture ſpeaks, *He that hath the Son, hath Life; but he that hath not the Son of God hath not Life*, 1 John 5. 12. *And there is no Condemnation to them which are in Chriſt Jeſus*, Rom. 8. 1. O my Beloved, we ſhall live or die, be ſaved or damned for ever

ever according as we do, or do not get an Union with Christ, and an Interest in Christ. This is that which lyes at the Bottom and Foundation of all, of all our Hopes, and of all our Mercies, or all our Comforts, of all our Acceptation and Communion with God, of all Grace on Earth, and all Glory in Heaven; and without it, whatsoever our Attainments in Religion are, whatever our Profession may be, whatever Place or Esteem we may have in the Church of God, though never so Raised and Eminent, yet we have not any thing that will avail us in a Dying Hour. I remember a Saying of a Learned Man, *That thou may'st live in Death*, saith he, *get into Christ, implant thy self into Christ by believing. Faith joins and unites us to Christ, and they that are in Christ cannot die, for Christ is their Life.* And indeed, if we can have Union with Christ, he will be Life in Death it self to us: *Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord*; that is, die, having Union with Christ, being implanted into Christ, *Rev.* 14. 13. If we have Union with Christ, he will not be only Life in Death to us, but he will even turn Death it self into Life; the King of Terrors into a King of Comforts; insomuch, that the Soul shall be able to triumph over it, as the Apostle doth, 1 *Cor.* 15. 55, 56, 57. Whereas, without this, without Union with Christ, an Interest in Christ, we shall never be able to look Death in the Face with Comfort, but shall, when we come to die, be some of the Miserablest Spectacles in the World. It is the Speech

of a Worthy Divine, who is ſo long ſince gone hence, *A Chriſtleſs dying Man or Woman* (ſaith he,) *is one of the ſaddeſt Spectacles in the World*: For a Man to be dying, and not Chriſtleſs, that is comfortable; for ſuch an one dies but to live for ever; he dies the Death of Nature, to live the Life of Glory; for a Man to be Chriſtleſs, and not Dying, is ſomething tollerable: For who knows, but that the next Meeting at an Ordinance, may be the time of God's Love to him of drawing him into Chriſt? But for a Man to be Dying and Chriſtleſs; Chriſtleſs and Dying too, that is intollerable, that is terrible indeed; for ſuch an one dies to be damned, and he is going off from all Hopes and Poſſibilities of Mercy for ever: Oh therefore above all, preſs after Union with Chriſt, and an Intereſt in Chriſt: This was *Paul*'s great Care and Sollicitude to the very laſt, that ſo he might go off the Stage with Comfort; and that for which he *accounted all things but Dung*, as moſt baſe and vile, *Phil.* 3. 8, 9. O Soul, didſt thou indeed know and conſider of how much Weight and Importance, an Intereſt in Chriſt is to thee, with Reference to thine Eternal Happineſs, thou wouldſt cry out as eagerly for Chriſt, as *Rachel* did for her Children, ſaying, Give me Chriſt, or elſe I die; give me Union with Chriſt, and an Intereſt in Chriſt, or I am undone eternally. O look to the great uniting Act of Faith, make a right Choice of Chriſt; chuſe him as your Lord and Head, your King and Saviour, and renew your Choice of him every

every Day, reſigning up your ſelves entirely to him, to be ſaved and governed by him in his own Way.

Secondly; Would you indeed have all ſet right, and made ready in the Matters of your Souls for a dying Hour? Then preſs after a firm and unſhaken Aſſurance of an Intereſt in God, and his Love, and of your Right and Title to Eternal Life of another, and better Life than this here. Without ſome good Evidence for Heaven, and ſome well-grounded Aſſurance of an Intereſt in God and Eternal Life, things are not ready with us, nor are we in ſuch a Preparedneſs for a dying Hour, as we ought to be. Though a Man have an Intereſt in God and his Love; though he hath a Right and Title to Eternal Life and Happineſs; yet as long as he is in the dark, and at an uncertainty in his own Soul about it, things are out of order with him, and he is greatly unready for a dying Hour: For pray mark, as our Intereſt in this is requiſite to our dying happily; ſo the Sight and Aſſurance of that Intereſt, is requiſite to our dying comfortably: Indeed, when a Man hath attained to ſome good Evidence for Heaven, to ſome well grounded Aſſurance of his Intereſt in God and Chriſt, then are things in a good Poſture with him in reference to a dying Hour; then he can play with Death, and triumph over it, as *Job* did, when he could ſay, *I know that my Redeemer liveth*, Job 19. 25, 26. And as the Apoſtle ſeems to ſpeak of it, 2 *Cor.* 5. 12. *We know that when our Earthly Houſe of this Tabernacle*

bernacle ſhall be diſſolved, we have a Building of God, an Houſe not made with Hands, Eternal in the Heavens: For this we groan earneſtly, deſiring to be cloathed upon with our Houſe, which is from Heaven. None of you do comfortably leave your Houſe, unleſs you have another to go unto; much leſs can you comfortably quit this World, unleſs you have ſome well-grounded Aſſurance of another, and a better Life. Take a Man that is in the Dark, and at a Loſs, as to his Intereſt in God and Chriſt, and he knows not what Death will do to him, nor where it will lodge him, whether in Heaven or Hell, whether upon the Throne of Glory, or in the Priſon of Eternal Darkneſs; in the Boſom of *Chriſt*'s Love, or under the Revelation of his Infinite and Eternal Wrath: And is ſuch an one ready for a Dying Hour? Surely, no. As ever therefore you would have things right and ready within indeed for a Dying Hour, you muſt preſs after an Aſſurance of your Intereſt in God and Chriſt; you muſt do as the Apoſtle exhorts, *Give all Diligence to make your Calling and Election ſure*, 2 Pet. 1. 10. You muſt every Day preſs after a fuller and firmer Aſſurance, as to your Eternal Intereſt; you muſt be much in Faith, much in Prayer, much in examining your Evidences, much in proving your State, much in looking after the Seal and Evidences of the Bleſſed Spirit: Which is indeed all in all; and never reſt till you can ſay, My Lord, and my God, my Heaven, my Glory; *God is the Rock of my Heart, and my Portion*

for

for ever. O then all will be ſweet and well with you. This is that which the Saints of Old have laboured after with their whole Might. *Say unto my Soul* (ſaith *David* to *God*,) *I am thy Salvation*, Pſal. 35. 3. *Set me as a Seal upon thy Heart, and a Signet upon thine Arm*, Cant. 8. 6. This *Auſtin* preſſed much after: *Lord*, ſaith he, *tell me what thou art to me. Say unto my Soul, I am thy Salvation: So ſay it, that I may hear it: Behold, The Ears of my Heart are before thee; open them, O Lord, and ſay unto my Soul, I am thy Salvation.* O my Beloved, this is worth preſſing after, for this is the welcomeſt News a poor Soul can poſſibly hear, to be told that God is his, and Heaven is his, and Eternal Life is his: And when once this News is come, then welcome Life, and welcome Death; welcome Time, and welcome Eternity: Then the *Soul* can ſay, O ſweet Eternity! O bleſſed Eternity! O Sirs, be not ſatisfied, without ſome good Aſſurance of *God*'s Love to your Souls, and your Right and Title to Heaven and Eternal Life! Yea, without the fulleſt Aſſurance that is attainable here: for know, that there are degrees in Aſſurance it ſelf. The Scripture mentions three degrees of Aſſurance. Firſt, there is Aſſurance, *The Work of Righteouſneſs is Peace, and the Fruit of Righteouſneſs is Aſſurance for ever*, Iſa. 31. 17. And, *Give all Diligence to make your Calling and Election ſure*, as in the place before-quoted. Secondly, There is much Aſſurance, *Our Goſpel came unto you, not in Word only, but in Power, and in the De-*

monſtration of the Spirit, and much Aſſurance, 1 Theſſ. 1. 5.

Thirdly, There is a full Aſſurance, *We deſire that every one of you do ſhew the ſame Diligence, to the full Aſſurance of Hope unto the end*, Heb. 6. 11. Now, my Beloved, I would not have you ſatisfied without Aſſurance, without much Aſſurance; yea, without a full Aſſurance; the more full your Aſſurance is, the more Chearfully, Joyfully, and Triumphantly will you die.

Thirdly, Would you indeed have all right, all in order, in the matter of your Souls, for a Dying Hour, then labour to maintain a conſtant actual Peace with God; every day making even with him, and renewing the Senſe of his pardoning Love in your Souls, as a firm Union with Chriſt, and a well-grounded Aſſurance of an Intereſt in God, and Eternal Life; ſo alſo, an actual Peace with God, and a daily renewed Pardon from him, is requiſite to a thorough readineſs and preparedneſs for a Dying Hour. *David* had an Intereſt in God; yea, and his Intereſt was clear to him; yet, how ſollicitous was he to get all even before God and him? And how uncomfortable was it with him, till he had renewed his Peace with God, when by his Fall it had been broken? *Pſalm* 51. 8, 12. This alſo is what is evidently held forth, *Job* 7. 21. Where *Job* pleads thus with God; *Why doſt thou not pardon mine Iniquity, and take away my Tranſgreſſion? For now ſhall I ſleep in the Duſt; thou ſhalt ſeek me in the Morning, but I ſhall*

not

not be. In the Verſe before, he acknowledgeth he had ſinned, and here he intimates, that God frowned on him for his Sin; the Senſe of pardoning Love was not renewed in his Soul, which here therefore he pleads for, and that upon this account, becauſe he was ſpeedily to die; intimating, he could not die with comfort, till he had a renewed Senſe of God's Pardoning Love. And this is the very thing which *David* begs in the *Pſalm* of my Text, in order to his comfortable going hence, (*viz.*) *That God would take away his Tranſgreſſions*, Pſal. 39. 8. As long as there is any Sin, any Guilt lying upon our Conſciences, any Sin unpardoned, any Difference between God and us, any Frowns in his Face towards us, we are unready for Death, and cannot with that Comfort and Boldneſs of Spirit, welcome it as we ought; but when our Peace with God is maintained, and we have a renewed Senſe of his Pardoning Love in our Souls, then are things right and in order with us indeed, and we may think of Death with Boldneſs and Comfort; and therefore mind this, as ever you would be found ready for a Dying Hour; every day even things between God and you; every day get a freſh Senſe of Pardon from him.

Firſt, As near as poſſible may be, do nothing that may occaſion any Breach between God and you, or raiſe any Frowns in his Face towards you: If you do not break with God, he will not break with you: All Breaches, as to Peace and Friendſhip between God and

us, begin on our part; yea, neither will God break with us for little things, in case they be not allowed by us, but watched and striven against; therefore, as near as possibly you can, do nothing to break and interrupt your Peace with God for one Moment. And because, when you have done all, many things may and will fall out, (we having sinful, sinning Hearts, and living in a World of Snares and Temptations,) for which God may justly frown upon us. Let us,

Secondly, Every day make even with him. In the close of every day, let us consider wherein we have broken with God, come short of Duty, given any Grief and Distaste to his Holy Spirit; and by Faith and Prayer, let us sue out the Pardon of it; and let us not lye down, if possible, without some Intimation of his Pardoning Love. For which end,

First, We should act Faith on the Blood and Advocateship of Jesus Christ, *Whom God hath set forth to be a Propitiation, through Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righeousness for Remission of Sins*, Rom. 3. 24, 25. And indeed, Christ hath set up a standing Office in Heaven, which we may call the Pardon-Office; he procureth new Pardons for his People daily, under their new Sins; *We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and he is the Propitiation for our Sins*, 1 John 2. 1, 2. Have daily recourse to the Blood of Christ; truly, without it, there's no living; the Best, the Holiest on Earth,

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have daily need of his Blood, and ſhould have daily recourſe unto it, for the maintaining of their Peace, and for the renewing of God's Pardoning Love in their Souls.

Secondly, We ſhould be humbly and earneſtly importunate with God in Prayer, reſolving not to let him go without his Bleſſing, carrying upon our Spirits the Senſe of the worth, and alſo of our Unworthineſs of it. Thus the Holy Men of God of Old have done: They have ſued out the Pardon of their Sins by Faith and Prayer, and gotten a freſh Senſe of God's Love, when they have broken with him; as I might inſtance in *Job*, in *David*, and others. We ſhould every day Pray, as that Father did; *O Lord*, ſaith he, *do not after the manner of a Judge, weigh or conſider what I have done, what I have ſpoken, what I have thought; but blot out all my Sins with thy own Blood.* And as another of them did, *Lord*, ſaith he, *there is that in me which may offend thy Holy Eyes, I know and confeſs it: But who ſhall cleanſe me? Or, to whom ſhall I fly for Relief but to thee? O hide not thy Face from me.* Truly, when we have walked moſt Watchfully, moſt Circumſpectly, many things may, and will fall out, that may offend the pure Eyes of God's Glory, which we ſhould confeſs and bewail before him, ſuing out the Pardon of them by the Blood of his Son. Some of the Saints have made this their daily Practice, and ſo have maintained their Peace for many Years together; and when they have come to die, have

gloriously triumphed over Death; and have gone off the Stage with much Comfort; and so should we.

Fourthly, Would you indeed have all right? All in order in your Souls, for a Dying Hour? Then be true and faithful to your own Consciences, that you may have them for you, and not against you, both while you live, and when you die. Conscience (my Beloved) is Christ's Deputy or Vicegerent in the Soul; it is both a Judge and a Witness for God within us; it either Accuses or Excuses, Acquits or Condemns, *Rom.* 2. 15. And according as Conscience is either for us, or against us; so we are either ready, or not ready; prepared, or not prepared for Death and Judgment: If we have the Witness and Judgment of our Consciences for us, then have we Boldness and Comfort both in Life and Death; then we can welcome Death's Approach to us; but if the Witness and Judgment of Conscience be against us, then Death cannot but be Terrible to us: *This is our rejoicing*, (saith the Apostle,) *the Testimony of our Consciences, that in Simplicity and Godly Sincerity, not in Fleshly Wisdom, but by the Grace of God, we have had our Conversation in the World*, 2 Cor. 1. 12. And again; *If our Hearts condemn us, God is greater than our Hearts, and knoweth all things; but if our Hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God*, 1 John 3. 21. Oh my Beloved, as a Peace with God, so a sound and holy Peace with a Man's own Conscience, (that is to say, to have the

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Witneſs and Judgment of a Man's own Conſcience for him, and not againſt him,) is highly requiſite for a right diſpoſing and preparing of us for a Dying Hour. As ever therefore you would have all ready and in order, againſt ſuch an Hour, mind this, and look after this; be ſure you carry it ſo to your own Conſciences, as that you may have them always for you, and not againſt you, while you live; and for you, and not againſt you, when you come to die. In order to which, mind theſe two things:

Firſt, Labour to get your Conſciences well enlightned and informed, and be much with God in Prayer; in order thereto, beg and implore God for a true and faithful Conſcience, a Conſcience that will bear a true and faithful Witneſs in your Souls, and that will paſs a right Judgment upon things, both upon your State and Actions. In *Heb.* 10. 21. we read of a true Heart, or a true Conſcience; that is, a Conſcience rightly informed, a Conſcience that bears a True and Faithful Witneſs, and that paſſeth a True and Faithful Judgment upon things: Such a Conſcience ſhould we beg of God, and labour by all means poſſible to attain unto. Oh, my Beloved! it is a dangerous thing to have an erroneous Conſcience, a miſtaking Conſcience, a Conſcience not rightly informed: For pray mark, This is what leaves a Man under a neceſſity of Sinning, and ſo of grieving the Spirit of God on the one hand, and it endangereth his Peace and Comfort on the other hand; for having

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an erroneous Conſcience, whether we obey it, or obey it not, we Sin; if we obey it, we Sin, becauſe Conſcience commands what is not agreeable to the Word of God; if we obey it not, we Sin, becauſe we rebel againſt the Light and Dictates of Conſcience, omitting that which Conſcience tells us is a Duty, though it be not a Duty; or do that which Conſcience tells us is a Sin, though it be not a Sin; labour therefore to get your Conſciences well informed and enlightned.

Secondly, Be ſure you do nothing againſt the Light and Dictates of Conſcience being rightly informed, but obey it in all things. In *Job* 24. 13. we read of ſome that *Rebel againſt the Light*; that is, that do Sin againſt their own Conſciences; which is a double Sin, a Sin cloathed with great Aggravations, and greatly diſcompoſeth us for a Dying Hour: But we muſt take heed of this, and liſten to the Voice of Conſcience; Conſcience regulated by the Word of God: God ſpeaks to us by our Conſciences, he ſpeaks to us through his Word by our Conſciences, and he ſpeaks to us through his Providence by our Conſciences, and we ſhould take heed of violating the Dictates, or ſpeaking of Conſcience in the leaſt. Doth not Conſcience many times tell us, ſuch and ſuch ways which we walk in, are not Good, and muſt be turned from, or we are Undone for ever? And now we ſhould be true and Faithful to our own Conſciences, and ſpeedily turn from thoſe ways; we ſhould have nothing to do with

with any thing that Conſcience condemns us in, or for. Again, doth not Conſcience many times tell you, that ſuch and ſuch Duties are totally neglected, or elſe ſeldom or ſlightly performed by you, which yet you ought to be converſant & diligent in the performance of? Now you ſhould herein alſo be Faithful and True to your own Conſciences; living up to the Conſtant, Diligent, Spiritual Performance of thoſe Duties. Again, doth not Conſcience many times tell you, that things are not right with you? That it is an evil Frame of Spirit you live in? That you are too Carnal, too Light, too Vain, too Frothy, too Eager in your Purſuits of this World, and too Remiſs in your Purſuits of Heaven and Eternity? Now, as ever you would be ready for a Dying Hour, you ſhould be Faithful to your own Conſcience, ſetting that right which is amiſs, and haſtening out of that Evil Frame into the contrary Gracious Frame. (O my Beloved) if you be True and Faithful to Conſcience, Conſcience will be True and Faithful to you, witneſſing for you, and not againſt you, both while you live, and when you die. In a word, in all things labour to keep a good Conſcience; this was *Paul*'s great Care and Exerciſe, *Acts* 24. 16. *Herein do I exerciſe my ſelf, to have always a Conſcience void of Offence towards God, and towards Men.* O this will be a Sweet and Bleſſed Exerciſe; and the more we are found in it while we live, the more Comfort will it afford us when we come to die.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, Would you indeed have all things right, and in order, in the Matters of your Souls, when a Dying Hour comes? Then labour for much Purity of heart and life, and by no means admit of any Sin, any Corruption whatſoever; the more Pure and Holy we are, the more ready we are, and in the better Poſture things are with us for a Dying Hour: *Without Holineſs*, (ſaith the Apoſtle) *no Man ſhall ſee God*, Heb. 12. 14. Holineſs is neceſſary unto Happineſs; Holineſs is the way unto Happineſs; Holineſs is what fits and prepares us for Happineſs, and brings us unto Happineſs; yea, Holineſs is a part of our Happineſs; a great part of the Happineſs of Heaven it ſelf lies in Holineſs; accordingly, the more Holy we are, the more we are ſuited to, and prepared for the future Happineſs, and ſo for Death and Judgment: For that which prepares us for the future Happineſs, that alſo prepares us for Death, which is but an In-let into that Happineſs for ever. Therefore if you would have all things right, all things ready indeed for a Dying Hour, then labour for the exacteſt Purity and Holineſs that poſſibly you can: This is that which the Apoſtle aims at, and prays for, on the Behalf of the *Theſſalonians*, as moſt conducing to the preparing of them for their latter end, 1 *Theſſ.* 3. 12, 13. *And the Lord make you to abound and increaſe in Love one towards another, and towards all Men, even as we do towards you, to the end we may eſtabliſh your Hearts unblameable in Holineſs before God, even our Father, at the coming*

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of the Lord Jesus Christ with all his Saints. The posture he would have them to be in at the Coming of Christ, is the posture of unblameable Holiness, which indeed is the best and readiest posture. The same things he prays for, in order to the same end, in 1 *Thess.* 5. 33. *And the very God of Peace sanctifie you wholly; and I pray God that your whole Spirit, Soul and Body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* This is that also which that other Apostle enjoins in order hereunto, 2 *Pet.* 3. 14. *Be diligent, that ye may be found of him in Peace, without Spot, and blameless.* The more Spotless and Blameless we are in our Spirits and Ways, the more ready we are for Death and Judgment. Oh, press after an eminency in Holiness, admitting of none, no, not the least Taint or Tincture of Sin, or Sinful Defilement, upon any terms whatsoever! Unholy Souls, are unready Souls; they are unready for Death, unready for Judgment, unready for the future Life: And for Men to talk of being ready for these, and yet be Unholy, is the greatest Folly in the World: Therefore labour for much Purity and Holiness.

First, Labour for much Purity and Holiness in your Lives and Walkings: This is what God indispensibly calls for, 1 *Pet.* 1. 15, 16. *As he that has called you is Holy, so be ye Holy in all manner of Conversation: Because it is written, Be ye Holy, for I am Holy.* We should press after Universal Holiness. There should be a Vein and a Tincture of Holiness run through all

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we do, even our Civil, as well as our Religious Actions; we ſhould, as near as poſſible, be Dedicated and Devoted to God, and our Lives ſhould be Lives of walking with him. They, and they only, who walk with God while they live, are thoſe who will be found ready to live with God when they come to die. As for all Careleſs, Licentious ones, let them never talk of being ready for Death and future Life; for they are at an utter Diſtance from any ſuch thing: Indeed, ready they are, but for what? Ready for Hell, ready for the Wrath of God, ready for Deſtruction: But they are not at all ready for a Bleſſed Eternity. The Apoſtle weeps over ſuch, as being indeed thus ready, *Phil.* 3.18,19. *Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are Enemies to the Croſs of Chriſt; whoſe end is Deſtruction, whoſe God is their Belly, whoſe Glory is their Shame, who mind Earthly Things.* Many there are who profeſs and hope well of themſelves, as to another Life, who are yet Looſe and Carnal, Wicked and Licentious in their Lives and Walkings: They do not watch and keep their Garments, but wallow in the Mire of their Luſts and Pollutions: They ſtrain their Profeſſion, with Foul, Groſs, and Scandalous Sins; at leaſt, they live, and allow themſelves in ſome ſecret way and haunt of Sinning, indulging this and the other Luſt: But (my Beloved) theſe are far indeed from being ready for a Dying Hour; and muſt expect to be caſt off from God and Chriſt for ever.

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Such were those, *Matth.* 7. 22, 23. *They came and cried, Lord, Lord:* Came with their Gifts, Parts, and Priviledges; but Christ sent them away, with a *Depart from me ye Workers of Iniquity.* So in *Jer.* 7. and beginning, we read of some that made Profession of God and his ways, and yet walked in Sin, and wallowed in all manner of Abomination: And what is the Issue? Verse the 15th. saith God, *I will cast you out of my sight:* God will at last cast off all Loose, Licentious Walkers; *Psalm* 21. 9. *David* prays thus, *Gather not my Soul with Sinners.* And truly, if you would not be gather'd with Sinners at last, you must not walk in Sin with Sinners now: And as for the Saints themselves, so far as they let down their Watch, and neglect their walking with God; so far as they give way to a Loose, Vain, Heedless way of Living; so far they have things out of Order with them, and they are unready for a Dying Hour. *Behold, I come as a Thief* (saith Christ) *blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his Garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his Shame,* Rev. 16. 15. So far as the Saints carry it unbecoming their High and Holy Profession (which is too too frequent with them) so far they are short of that compleat Readiness for Death and Eternity they should press after.

Secondly, Labour for much Purity and Holiness in your Hearts and Affections. We must be Pure and Holy within, as well as without; in our Hearts and Affections, as well as in our Lives and Walkings, if we would

would have all right indeed for a Dying Hour. *Who ſhall aſcend into the Hill of the Lord? And who ſhall ſtand in his Holy Place?* The Anſwer is, *He that hath clean Hands, and a pure Heart*, Pſal. 24. 3, 4. And Chriſt expreſly tells us, *Bleſſed are the pure in Heart, for they ſhall ſee God*, Mat. 5. 8. Indeed impure Hearts are unfit to ſee God: He is a Pure and Holy God, nor may Impure-hearted ones expect that Bleſſed Sight. I remember a Saying, which I have read in one of the Antients, (which I look upon to be a great Saying,) *Woand alas! O Lord*, (ſaith he) *how prepoſterous is it? How raſh and unadviſed? How inordinate? How remote from the Rule of the Word of thy Truth and Wiſdom, for a Man to deſire to ſee God with an unclean Heart?* Oh! have a watchful Eye upon your Hearts: And labour to keep them as free from any Taint and Tincture of Sin as poſſibly you can.

Firſt, Be ſure you ſuffer no Luſt to get up into the Throne, where it is too often found. When Sin is conſented to by the Will, the Luſt is on the Throne in the Heart; and indeed it is wonderful to think, how ſoon one or anothers Corruption will mount up into the Throne in the Soul, if we let down our Watch but a little: But Oh, take heed of this; ſo far as any one Luſt whatſoever is predominant within us, ſo far we are marvellouſly unready for a Dying Hour. And not only ſo; but,

Secondly, Watch narrowly againſt the very firſt

firſt Riſings and Motions of Sin within; nip Luſt, if poſſible, in the very Bud and Bloſſom. It is true, this calls upon us to have a very curious Eye upon our Hearts; and indeed, ſuch an Eye we ſhould have upon them, we muſt have upon them, if we mean to be Chriſtians indeed. Grace will teach a Man, not only to oppoſe the Acts of Sin, and to watch againſt the Reign of any Heart-Luſt; but alſo to oppoſe the very firſt Motions and Riſings of Sin in the Soul. And the more you do this, the better Poſture you are in for a Dying Hour.

CHAP. IX.

A further Direction, in order to a compleat Preparation for Death, to preſs after the nobleſt Strains of Grace. Several of theſe pointed at, and inſiſted on, as tending hereunto.

Sixthly, WOuld you indeed have all ready, and in order, in your Souls, for a Dying Hour? Then reſt not in low and ordinary, but aſpire after the higheſt and nobleſt Strains of Grace. The better to underſtand this, you muſt know, That there are ſome higher and more noble Strains of Grace than ordinary; Strains of Grace, that carry a peculiar Glory and Excellency in them, and do in an eminent Manner delight the Heart of God: Indeed, every Strain of Grace, even the leaſt and loweſt, has a Beauty and Glory in it, and

and is a Pleaſure to God's Heart: The leaſt Dram of Godly Sorrow, the leaſt Holy Awe of God, and trembling at his Word; the leaſt Breathing of Love and Deſire towards him; the leaſt leaning upon him, in a way of Hope and Dependance; Oh, it has a great Glory in it, and is a Delight to God's Soul; *The Lord taketh Pleaſure in them that fear him, in them that hope in his Mercy*, Pſal. 147. 11. But, my Beloved, there are ſome more choice and eminent Strains and Actings of Grace, that are above the ordinary rate, and do peculiarly delight the Heart of God, and bring Honour to him; and the more you come up to theſe, and live under the Power of theſe, the more ready Poſture you are in for a Dying Hour. Grace is the beginning of Glory: 'Tis (as a worthy Divine expreſſes it) *The Infancy of Heaven and Glory*; and the higher it riſes in us, the nearer it comes to Glory, and the more it fits us for it. Therefore, I ſay, reſt not in low and ordinary, but covet and preſs after the higheſt and nobleſt Strains of Grace, ſome of which I ſhall here ſet down, and inſiſt a little upon, in order to this great End of being found under the exacteſt Readineſs for a Dying Hour. The noble Strains of Grace I would have you come up unto, are theſe;

1. For a Man to be High, and yet Low; high in Worth and Attainments, but low in Spirit; low in his own Thoughts and Apprehenſions of himſelf; to be humble under high and great Acquirements, this is noble Grace.

Grace. 'Tis ſaid of *Athanaſius*, Ὑψηλὸς τοῖς ἔργοις ταπεινὸς τῷ φρονήματι. That he *was high in Works, but low in Spirit:* He had great Attainments, but was very humble and lowly under all, which is mention'd as a peculiar Excellency in him. And I remember a Saying which I have read in one of the Ancients, ſpeaking of Humility: *For a Man to be humble* (ſays he) *in a low, deſpicable, abject Condition; this is no great Matter, but Honourable Humility*; that is to ſay, for a Man to be humble in an high and proſperous Condition, to be humble under eminent Employments; *This is a great thing, a rare Virtue indeed.* O for a Man to be high in Attainments, high in Gifts, high in Graces, high in Comforts, high in Services, high in Succeſſes, high in Place and Eſteem among Men; and yet at the ſame time to be low in Mind, low in Heart, low in his Eſteem and Apprehenſion of himſelf; this is an high and eminent Strain of Grace; this *Paul* excelled in, and 'twas his Crown and Glory; he was a Man of as high Attainments and Accompliſhments, as moſt that ever lived; he was high in Gifts, high in Graces, high in Comforts, high in Services, high in Succeſſes, high in all true Worth and Excellency; and yet how low, how humble in Spirit was he? How little in his own Eye, and how vile in his own Eſteem? You know how he ſpeaks of himſelf, *The chief of Sinners*, 1 Tim. 1. 15. *Leſs than the leaſt of all Saints*, Epheſ. 3. 8. *I am the*

the leaſt of the Apoſtles: Not worthy to be called an Apoſtle, 1 Cor. 15. 9. *I am nothing*, 2 Cor. 12. 11. This alſo was a part of Chriſt's Crown and Glory: Who ever ſo eminent in Gifts and Graces? Who ever abounded with ſuch Glorious Endowments as he? And yet, who ſo Meek, ſo Humble, ſo Lowly, as he? *Learn of me*, (ſaith he) *for I am meek and lowly in Heart*, Mat. 11. 29. In a Verſe or two before, he had told us, *That all things were delivered unto him by the Father*; and yet here, *I am meek and lowly in Heart*: He was humble under all his Advancements and Attainments: Oh, labour to be like him herein; whatever your Attainments are, labour to be humble under them, and that becauſe he was ſo; *Bluſh, O Duſt and Aſhes! Bluſh to think of being proud, be aſhamed to be proud: God humbles himſelf, and doſt thou exalt thy ſelf?* So one ſpeaks. And again elſewhere, *'Tis intolerable Impudence*, (ſays he) *that when Majeſty empties, and humbles it ſelf, a vile Worm ſhould ſwell, and be blown up with Pride.* O be humble, whatever your Attainments are: The more humble you are, the more Precious you are in God's Sight; for, *he hath Reſpect unto the Lowly, but beholds the Proud afar off*, Pſal. 138. 6. Yea, *He reſiſteth the Proud*, He ſets himſelf in Battel Array againſt the Proud, *James* 4. 6. *Arrogate nothing to thy ſelf of theſe things that are in thee, but thy Sins; by ſo much the more Precious thou art in God's Eyes, by how much the more vile and deſpicable thou art in thine own Eyes,*

ſays

ſays *Bernard.* And to ſay no more, none more ready to die than the humble and lowly Perſon; none more unready than the Proud and High-minded.

3. For a Man to be full, and yet empty; full of Enjoyments, and yet empty of the Love of the World; for a Man to enjoy an Affluence of this World's Good, a Fulneſs of all Creature-Comforts and Contentments, and yet to be dead to all, and ſit looſe from all, placing his whole Happineſs in God and Chriſt; this is a choice, a noble and excellent Strain of Grace indeed. We read of ſome, and but of ſome, in Scripture, who under an Affluence of outward Enjoyments, have been weaned from all, and ſat looſe from all, and have kept up their Communion with God, placing the whole Reſt and Happineſs of their Souls therein; ſome ſuch (I ſay) we read of in Scripture, but truly they are but very few, and indeed 'tis both a rare and a difficult thing, for a Soul thus to do: Theſe things eſpecially, when enjoyed in the Fulneſs of them, are ſo apt to ingroſs the Heart to themſelves, and to alienate it from God, and Communion with God, that 'tis indeed a very rare and difficult thing for a Man, under an Affluence of them, to ſit looſe from them, and make God, and Communion with God, all in all to Him. 'Tis a great Saying, which I have heard of a Learned Man, *Although Adverſity breaks many, yet Proſperity and Fulneſs of Enjoyments kills many more: And how rare a*

Man

Man is that, who in Prosperity does not, at least a little in some degree or other, let down his Watch, and remit his Strictness and Exactness in walking? David *was a wise Man, and* Solomon *was a wiser; and yet both the one and the other discovered great Sin and Folly through abounding Prosperity.* So that, I say, 'tis both a rare and difficult thing; but by how much the more rare and difficult it is, by so much the more Excellent and Eminent, when attain'd. Oh! for a Man to swim Chin-deep in the Streams of Creature-Comforts, and yet not to forsake the Fountain of Living Waters: For a Man to have the Streams run pleasantly on each Hand of him, and yet to bathe and delight only in the Fountain, as his Rest and Happiness; for a Man in the height of Prosperity, to be able to say to God, as the Psalmist in his Affliction did, *Psal.* 73.25. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? And there is none upon Earth I desire besides thee:* This is noble Grace indeed: Oh, labour to come up to this, whatever your Worldly Enjoyments are, though never so Great, so High, so Pleasant; yet as ever you would be ready for a Dying Hour, sit loose from all, die to all; the more dead we are to the World, the more ready we are to go out of the World. A Worldly Spirit, a Spirit in Love with this World, is most unready for a Dying Hour. How can he be ready to leave the World, that is in Love with the World? A Worldly Spirit is most Odious to the Spirit of God, and most unsuitable

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to the future Life; and one living in that Spirit, cannot be fit to die. 'Tis a great Saying I have read in one, *He is Perfect, whose Soul is alienated from the World: But* (says he,) *that Soul is far from God, to whom this miserable Life is Sweet:* That is to say, who is fond of these poor things here. Oh! die daily to the World under all your Enjoyments of it, if you would indeed be ready to die.

3. For a Man to be Empty, and yet Full; to be destitute of all outward Comforts and Enjoyments, and yet to want nothing, but to be content, and to see all in God, and enjoy all in God: For a Man to be afflicted and distressed, and yet at the same time see a Fulness and Sufficiency of all Good and Happiness in a naked God, and naked Godliness, and accordingly to live up unto him, and rest satisfied in him: This is a noble strain of Grace indeed. This the Prophet, and in him, the Church, resolved upon, *Hab.* 3. 17, 18. *Although the Fig-tree shall not Blossom, neither shall Fruit be in the Vine; the labour of the Olive shall fail, and the Fields shall yield no Meat; the Flock shall be cut off from the Fold, and there shall be no Herd in the Stalls.* Here you see, is a most sad Supposition, a most forlorn and destitute condition supposed to come: Well, and what then? In case all this come to pass, what will the Church do then? That the 18th Verse tells us, *Yet I will rejoyce in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation:* She is resolved to live upon God, and

delight her ſelf with God: She ſees enough in him alone, and ſets him, and her Intereſt in him, over-againſt all Wants, Loſſes, and Afflictions. So the Apoſtles, 2 *Cor.* 6. 10. who were *as having nothing, yet poſſeſſing all things:* They ſaw all in Chriſt, and enjoyed all in Chriſt. *Here* (as one gloſſes upon the place,) *we poſſeſs nothing, but do wander up and down from place to place; yet poſſeſſing Chriſt, in him we poſſeſs all things.* Oh! for a Man to ſee and enjoy all in Chriſt, when the World frowns upon him, and is low with him, this is a noble ſtrain of Grace; and let me ſay this, that 'tis an Argument that we have Carnal Hearts, if we ſee not all in God; and enough in God to ſatisfie and make us happy, whether we have any thing or nothing of this World. Heaven, which Death ſends us to, if we are indeed ready for it, is nothing elſe but the Viſion and Fruition of God; for there he is all in all: And certainly, if we do not ſee all in God now, and enough in God now, we cannot ſuppoſe our ſelves to be ſo fully ready for Death and Eternity, as we ought to be.

4. For a Man to have no Affliction, and yet to be deeply afflicted; to be wholly free from all Perſonal Affliction, and yet greatly to lay to heart, and be afflicted for the Afflictions of God's Name and People, this is glorious Grace, Grace in luſtre. 'Tis the Obſervation of a worthy Divine, that in the Day of the Churches Trouble and Affliction, when both his Name and People do greatly ſuffer,

God

God does ſometimes leave ſome of his People an Affluence of all outward good things; when others are ſtript of all their Comforts, they are full; when others are in ſtraits, they abound; neither is there any Cloud upon their Tabernacle. And this God does to try them, whether they will take up in their Enjoyments, and forget the Afflictions of his Name and People: And truly not to do ſo, but in ſuch a caſe to lay the Churches Afflictions to Heart, and to bleed and mourn with the Bleeding Intereſt of God's Name and People; this is pure Grace, and marvellous pleaſing to God. Such Grace ſome of the Saints have come up unto. Such Graces were found in *David*, 2 *Sam.* 7. 1. *And it came to paſs, when the King ſat in his Houſe, and the Lord had given him Reſt round about, from all his Enemies, that the King ſaid unto* Nathan *the Prophet, See now I dwell in an Houſe of Cedar, but the Ark of God dwelleth without Curtains.* Mark, all was well with *David*, he had Reſt, and he dwelt in a Houſe of *Cedar*; he had things ſuitable for, and becoming a King: Ah, but all was not well with the Intereſt of God, and his Worſhip: *David*'s Houſe and Intereſt proſpered; but it fared not ſo well with the Houſe and Intereſt of God; and therefore, all his Enjoyments were as nothing to him, he ſo laid the Sufferings of God's Name and Worſhip to Heart. The like was found in *Nehemiah*, Chap. 2. all things were well with him in his own Perſon: He was the King's Cup-bearer, and li-

ved under the Enjoyment of an Affluence of all outward Contentments; and yet was in deep Affliction of Spirit, upon the account of the Churches Affliction: *When I heard these Words*, (says he,) Chap. 14. These Words! What Words? Why, that the *Remnant that were left of the Captivity, were in great Affliction and Reproach; that the Wall of* Jerusalem *was broken down, and that the Gates thereof were burnt with Fire.* So Verse 3. *Now when I heard these Words, I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted and prayed before the God of Heaven*; and in Chap. 2. beginning, *his Countenance*, ('tis said,) *was sad*, upon this account. O, this was rare Grace, choice Grace! No Personal Affliction, yet deeply Afflicted in, and with the Afflictions of the Church; so deeply Afflicted, that all his Personal Comforts, though great, were nothing to him. The like you find in *Daniel*, Chap. 10. 2, 3. Oh, labour to come up to this Strain of Grace! It may be, things are well with you, and you have all that Heart can wish: But if they are not so with the Interests of God's Name and People, you should be deeply afflicted for this, in the midst of all your Personal Comforts; and the more of this Spirit is in you, the more excellent your Grace is.

5. For a Man to submit chearfully to, and acquiesce in the Will of God, when most sharp and severe upon this outward Interest, this is a noble Strain of Grace. When God shall exercise a Man with rending tearing Dispensations,

ſations, adding Sorrow to Sorrow to him, breaking him with Breach upon Breach, cauſing all his Waves and his Billows to go over him; and yet then for him quietly to acquieſce in, and chearfully to ſubmit to what God does, this is choice Grace: Such Grace was found in *Aaron*, *Lev.* 10. 3. God ſlew two of his Sons at once, and the Diſpenſation was attended with ſo many aggravating Circumſtances, as made it almoſt unparallell'd, not to be equall'd, ſo terrible was it; and yet under that great Stroke, *Aaron held his Peace*, he ſubmitted freely, and acquieſced chearfully. The like was found in *Job*, when God had broken him all to pieces, he Worſhips him, and bleſſes his Name. *Job* 12.21,22. And this was eminent in Chriſt himſelf, and was indeed his Crown and Glory: *Father, not my Will, but thy Will be done*, Mat. 26.39. He freely ſubmits his Will to the Fathers, though he ſaw the Father coming forth againſt him in a moſt terrible Diſpenſation. Oh, for a poor Soul to lye down at the Foot of God, and to be ſo melted into his Will, as chearfully to bow to it, and acquieſce in it under the ſharpeſt Diſpenſations! This is Noble Grace indeed. Oh! preſs after this, this is very neceſſary to prepare us for a Dying Hour; and the more of this, the more ready for that Hour.

6. For a Man to maintain the Actings of his Faith in God, and to think honourably of him when yet he Frowns, and all things ſeem to make againſt the Soul: This is a No-

ble Strain of Grace. Such Grace was found in *Abraham*, who, 'tis ſaid, *againſt Hope, believed in Hope*; and ſo *was ſtrong in Faith*, Rom. 4. 18, 19, 20. when he had no encouragement; yea, when all things oppoſed him, yet then he maintained his Faith in God. So *Job*, Chap. 13. 15. *Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him.* Oh! to love a ſmiting God, and to truſt in a ſlaying God, this is Noble Grace: For a Man to maintain the Actings of his Faith in God, when he comes forth as an Enemy againſt him: This God calls for. He expects, that *when we walk in Darkneſs, and ſee no Light, then we ſhould truſt in the Name of the Lord*; and ſo to do his Noble Grace, *Iſa.* 50. 10, 11. Truly, 'tis often times the Caſe of God's People, that they walk in Darkneſs, and ſee no Light; all things ſeem to be againſt them. Poſſibly God Frowns and Afflicts; he Frowns within, and he Afflicts without: 'Yea, the poor 'Soul ſees nothing but Difficulties and Diſ-'couragements, look which way he will: He 'looks into his own Heart, and there he can-'not find any one Grace or gracious Diſpoſi-'tion: He looks into the World, and there 'perhaps, he cannot ſee any one promiſe that 'he dares lay hold upon: He looks back for 'former Experiences, and they are all out of 'ſight: He runs to his Evidences, and they 'are all blotted that he cannot read. Thus he is beſet with Difficulties, and all things ſeem to make againſt him, both within and without; and yet now, when thus in the Dark,

Dark, for the Soul to believe in God, and think well and honourably of him; this is Noble Grace indeed, this is Faith in luſtre: To call Chriſt Lord, when he calls us Dog, and to faſten by Faith upon him, when he is beating us off, as to ſenſe at leaſt, as 'twas with the Woman, *Mat.* 15. 26, 27, 28. this is glorious Grace: For a Man to think well, and hope well, and believe well, in the Face of Frowns and Diſcouragements: For a Man, when God is frowning, and ſmiting, cordially to ſay, this is but for a time, he will Smile again; he is but behind the Curtain, and will appear again; his Deſire is not to ruin me, but refine me: He is but making me to prize his Grace and Preſence more; there is Love in all this. Oh! for a Man to believe, that there is Love in God's Heart, when he ſees nothing but Frowns in his Face, and meets with nothing hardly but Blows from his Hand: For a Man to believe, that God intends nothing but Good, when he inflicts variety of Evils, ſurely this is glorious Grace: Oh that you would labour for ſuch Grace! Such Grace will look Death in the Face with Boldneſs. 'Tis a great Speech, which Holy *Rutherford* hath, 'I lay 'Inhibitions on my Thoughts (ſays he,) that 'they receive no Slander of my only Belo-'ved: Let him even ſay out of his own 'Mouth, there is no hope; yet will I die in 'that ſweet beguile: Is it not ſo? But I 'ſhall ſee the Salvation of God; it is my Joy 'to believe under the Water, and to die with

'Faith in my Hand, griping of Chriſt. Beg 'ſuch Grace of God.

7. For a Man to ſee a Beauty and Excellency in Service, as well as in Enjoyment, in Work, as well as in Reward, and accordingly to have his Heart lye in it: This alſo is Noble Grace. Sirs, there is a Beauty and Excellency in Service; for a Man to be uſed and employed for God, and to act for him in the World, is the higheſt Honour and Excellency, (next to Union and Communion with him,) that can be put upon a poor Creature: 'Twas the Honour of Chriſt, it is the Honour of Angels: Service is better than Enjoyment: *'Tis a more bleſſed thing to give than to receive*, Acts 20. 53. Now when a Soul has anſwerable Thoughts and Apprehenſions about it, does practically, and indeed ſee a Beauty and Excellency in Service for God, and accordingly is active for him, willing to be employed by him, and that though he has no Reward at preſent from him; this is Noble Grace. This was found in *Paul*, *Unto me*, (ſaith he,) *is this Grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unſearchable Riches of Chriſt*, Eph. 3. 8. He look'd on't as an Honour, a Favour to be employed in the Work and Service of Chriſt. And again, 1 *Tim.* 1. 12. *I thank Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he accounted me faithful, putting me into the Miniſtry.* Here he bleſſes Chriſt his Lord and Maſter, for uſing him in his Work; yea, ſuch a Worth, Beauty and Excellency, did he ſee in his Service, that he was content

to

to ſtay out of Heaven, and the Boſom of Chriſt's Love, where yet he earneſtly longed to be, that he might do further Service for Chriſt in this World. So you find, *Phil.* 1. 21, 22, 23. Oh! for a Soul to long, and long earneſtly for Heaven, and the immediate Enjoyment of Chriſt there, and yet to be content to ſtay here in a ſinful, ſinning, troubleſom World, meerly to do ſome further Service for Chriſt, and to Honour him yet in the Diſcharge of his Work and Warfare, this is high Grace. This Holy *Rutherford* hath attained unto; he could under high Aſſurance of Heaven, be content to ſtay many Years out of it, to preach Chriſt. The ſame Mind dwelt in Chriſt himſelf, *Who went about doing good, making it his Meat and Drink to do his Father's Will, and to finiſh his Work.* Oh! when a Soul comes to this, then he is fit to live, and fit to die: When with that Ancient Father, we come to ſay indeed, *What is it to live, and not to live for Uſe and Service?* When we value Life and Days in this World, no further than we are ſome way ſerviceable to Chriſt; this is growing Grace.

8. For a Man to rejoice in the Gifts, Graces, and Uſes of others, and that though they out-ſhine and eclipſe his: For a Man to rejoice to ſee Grace flouriſhing in others, and to ſee the Work of God carried on by others, though he himſelf be laid aſide, and does not ſhare in the Honour of it; this is pure Grace, Grace in luſtre. Such Grace was found in *Moſes*; *Envieſt thou for my ſake?* (ſaid he to

Joshua, who would have had him to forbid *Eldad* and *Medad* to Prophesie in the Camp,) *Would God that all the Lord's People were Prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them*, Numb. 11. 29. He was so far from envying at them, that he wishes there were more of them. Such Grace was found also in *John* the *Baptist*, John 3. 26, 27, 30. He Rejoiced in Christ's being owned and honoured, and flock'd unto, and in the increase of his Esteem with Men, though to his own Abasement. In *Verse 26th*, some of *John*'s Disciples come and tell him, That *all Men come to Christ*: Well, says he, 'tis but his due: *Ver.* 27. *A Man can receive nothing, unless it be given him from Heaven: You your selves bear me Witness, that I said, I am not the Christ; and this my Joy is fulfilled, that he must increase, but I must decrease.* As if he had said, 'Tis so far from being a Trouble to me, that 'tis indeed the compleating of my Joy. Such Grace was found in *Paul*, *Phil.* 1. 18. who rejoiced that Christ was Preached, though with a design to cloud and eclipse him: *Christ is Preached, and I therein do rejoice; yea, and will rejoice.* Some are apt to think, 'twill be an Affliction to me, (says he,) that Christ is Preached by any but my self; whereas indeed, this is ground of great Joy to me: I rejoice, that though I cannot be permitted to Preach Christ my self, yet that so many others do Preach him. And I remember a great Speech of *Luther*, (arguing the same Grace to be in him,) writing to *Melancthon*,

to

to comfort him under the Lets and Oppoſitions the Work and Cauſe of God met withal in his time; the Cauſe of God was oppoſed, and his Work obſtructed: In the ſenſe of which *Melancthon* was greatly troubled and dejected; and *Luther* underſtanding it, writes an Epiſtle to him, to comfort and encourage him, in which he has this Saying, 'God, (ſays he,) is able to raiſe the Dead, 'and he is able to ſupport his Fallen Cauſe, 'and to raiſe it when Fallen. If he ſhall not 'account us worthy to be uſed therein, let 'him do it by others, and make uſe of others. Mark, He was content the Work of God ſhould be done by others. There are two things which I look upon, to carry as pure and noble Grace in them, as any whatſoever: One is, to be willing to be uſed in God's Work, without being taken notice of, or having the Honour of it: The other is, for a Man to rejoice to ſee the Work of God carried on by others, though he himſelf be laid aſide, and has not the Honour to be uſed therein. Oh, labour for ſuch Grace! Grace that will rejoice in the Gifts, Graces, Uſes and Succeſſes of others, though you thereby are out-ſhined.

9. For a Man to have great Affection to the Name and Honour of God and Chriſt, and to think nothing too much to do, too hard to ſuffer, or too dear to part withal for the Service and Advancement thereof: This is Noble Grace. When a Man hath high and paramount Affections to the Name of God

God and Christ, loving and preferring of it infinitely before all his own Interests and Concerns, being ready to be, do, or suffer any thing for the Service of it. Oh what Grace is this! Such Grace some of the Saints have attained unto. *Lord* (says *Moses* concerning *Israel*,) *if thou wilt forgive their Sin: and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of the Book which thou hast Written*, Exod. 32. 32. What is here meant by the Book which God had written, I shall not now stand to enquire or determine; but to be content to be Blotted out of it, was to be sure, a great piece of Self-denial; and this, *Moses* desired, you see, rather than that the People should be utterly destroyed; and all because he knew how much the Glory of God was concerned, and would suffer by their Destruction, as appears by comparing this Verse with Verse 12. The Sum (as one observes is,) is, 'That *Moses* 'prefers the Glory of God before his own 'Salvation, whose Glory was conjoined with '*Israel*'s Preservation, in respect of the Pro-'mises made to the Fathers, and in respect 'of the Blasphemies which the *Egyptians* 'and other Adversaries were ready to belch 'out against God, should he destroy them. Such Grace was found also in *John Baptist*, in the place lately mentioned, *John* 3. latter end, who was content Christ should raise himself out of his Abasement. Such Grace was found in Christ, who preferred his Father's Glory before his own Life, *John* 22. 27, 28. Such Grace was found in *Paul*, *who was willing*

ling not only to be bound, but even to die for the ſake of Chriſt, Acts 21. 13. for the Name, the Honour of Chriſt: Chriſt's Honour was ſo dear to him, that he could be content to die to ſerve it; he preferred it before his Life. Oh my Beloved! when a Soul ſhall be ſo ſwallowed up with love and zeal for the Glory of God, and the Intereſt of Chriſt in the World, as that his own Intereſt are in a manner over-look'd and forgotten by him: When to ſee the Name of God exalted, ſhall be a Man's greateſt Triumph; and to ſee it debaſed, ſhall be his greateſt Trouble: When his Practical Language ſhall be ſuch as this, Father, here I am: Which way ſoever thy Glory lies, I am ready to ſerve thee in it; 'tis Honour enough for me to Honour God; 'tis Happineſs enough for me to glorifie God: And therefore let God do with me, and let him call me to do whatever he will in order thereunto: Let him, if he pleaſes, eclipſe my Name, and throw my Glory in the Duſt, ſo be it he will thereby raiſe his own Name, and brighten his own Glory: Let him, if he pleaſes, make me a Foot-ſtool, and let me be trampled upon, ſo be it he will advance himſelf into the Throne thereby: Let me die, if his Will be ſo, that his Glory may live: Whatever becomes of me, though I ſhould be ſtripped of all, though my Name and Intereſt ſhould not, yet let God be magnified; let God have Honour in the World, and let the Intereſt and Kingdom of Chriſt proſper, 'tis enough, I am ſatisfied. When I

ſay,

ſay, 'tis thus with a Soul, this ſpeaks Noble Grace indeed. Oh preſs after ſuch Grace! The more you love the Name of God and Chriſt, the fitter you are either to live or die.

10. For a Man not only to be willing to ſuffer, but alſo to rejoice in Sufferings, for the ſake of Chriſt and the Goſpel: For a Man chearfully to take up the Croſs for Chriſt, and to look upon it as his Crown and Glory, as an Honour and Preferment to him; this is alſo a high ſtrain of Grace, and is greatly pleaſing to God. The Croſs, my Beloved, in it ſelf, *is a black ſoure Crab-tree*, (as one calls it;) but though ſuch in it ſelf, yet as 'tis born for the ſake of Chriſt, and ſo his Croſs, 'tis an Honour, and not a Reproach; a Crown of Glory, a Royal Diadem upon the Head of a poor Creature: *To you is given on the Behalf of Chriſt, to ſuffer for his ſake*, Phil. 1. 29. Sufferings for Chriſt are Noble, Royal, Honourable Gifts, more Honourable than the Crowns and Kingdoms of this World: A Priſon for Chriſt is more Honourable than the ſtatelieſt Palaces of the greateſt Princes: Bonds for Chriſt, are more Honourable than Ropes of Pearl and Diamonds. Now when a Soul ſhall look on theſe things as ſuch, and accordingly rejoice in them; this is Noble Grace indeed: Such Grace was found in the Diſciples, *Acts* 5. 41. *Who rejoiced*, (or as the Word is, *leapt for Joy*,) *that they were counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for the Name of Chriſt*: Or, as the Words

Words may be rendred, that they were honoured to be diſhonoured for Chriſt. So the Apoſtle and his Brethren, *Rom.* 5. 3. *We glory in Tribulation*; *and*, *I rejoice* (ſays *Paul*,) *in Reproaches*, *Neceſſities*, *and Perſecutions*, *for Chriſt*, 2 Cor. 12. 10. So thoſe Worthies, *Heb.* 10. 34. *Who took joyfully the ſpoiling of their Goods.* This Chriſt calls for, *Mat.* 5. 22. *Rejoyce and be exceeding glad*, *when Men perſecute you for my ſake.* And again, *Count it all Joy when you fall into divers Afflictions*, &c. *James* 1. 12. 'Tis admirable to think how ſome of the Saints, both in former and latter times, have gloried in the Croſs of Chriſt, and even longed for it. *Luther* longed for the Honour of Martyrdom, and was ready even to envy thoſe that were called unto it, when he was not: For Writing to ſome of his Acquaintance in Bonds for Chriſt and the Goſpel, he breaks out into this Complaint, 'O miſera-'ble me, who have been firſt in teaching 'theſe things; but laſt, and perhaps never 'worthy to be a partaker of your Bonds and 'Fires. Oh labour for ſuch Grace! We think it much if we be content to ſuffer; but we ſhould rejoice in Sufferings, glory in the Croſs, carry our ſelves under Sufferings for Chriſt, as looking upon him to be (for ſo indeed they are,) an Honour and Priviledge unto us.

11. For a Man in a Proſperous Condition, all things going ſmoothly with him in the World, to be willing to looſe Anchor, and be gone hence to Heaven; yea, for a Man to long,

long, and long earneſtly for a Diſſolution, that he might be with Chriſt fully, and for ever with him; this is Noble Grace. Sirs, take a Man whoſe Mountain of Proſperity ſtands ſtrong, whoſe Paths are as it were, ſtrewed with Roſes, the Roſes of Creature-Contentments; who has all that Heart can wiſh of this World's Good, the Streams running pleaſantly on each hand on him: For ſuch an one in ſuch a Condition to long, and long earneſtly to be gone to his Dear Lord, that ſo he may be fully like him, and may ſee him as he is, that he may be eternally in his Preſence, ſwallowed up in the Love, Praiſes, and Admirations of him, be a perfect Partaker of his Life and Image: This is great and glorious Grace. When though a Man's Condition in the World, be every way ſuch, as that he may well ſay, *It is good to be here:* Yet the daily Pulſe of his Soul, is that of the Spouſe, *Cant.* 8. 14. *Make haſte, my Beloved, and be thou like a Roe, or young Hart, upon the Mountains of Spices*; make haſte to fetch me hence to Heaven. This is Noble Grace, and that which every one does not come up unto. Indeed, when we are in Affliction, and our Lives are better unto us, by reaſon of many and great Trials, Difficulties and Temptations, then many are willing to be gone. But this is ſo far from Noble Grace, that this may be where there is no Grace at all. But when the Sun ſhines upon our Tabernacle, and ſets not; when we live in a Paradiſe of Earthly Comforts

and

and Contentments; then to pant, and long to be gone to be with Chriſt; then to ſuſpire and breathe after the other World, and with an Holy Impatience to look out for it, this is glorious Grace, Grace that carries an Heavenly Odour and Savour with it. Thus I have mentioned ſome of thoſe more Noble and Excellent Strains of Grace for our Imitation, which I would have you to labour to come up unto; and the more you come up to theſe, the more fit you are to live, and the more ready to die.

CHAP. X.

Wherein further Directions are laid down, in order to the ſetting things aright, and making him ready for a Dying Hour.

Seventhly, WOuld you indeed have all things, right and in order, before a Dying Hour comes? Then be diligent and faithful in the Work of God, that Work which God in a particular manner hath given you to do: We have all our Work to do, and that given us from God; we have general Work, and ſpecial Work.

Firſt, We have general Work to do; the Works of our Chriſtian Calling, the Work of our Salvation, which we are commanded *to work out with Fear and Trembling*, Phil. 2. 12. the Work of Faith, and the labour of Love;

Love; the Work of Mortification, Self-Denial, and the like. We have alſo,

Secondly, Special Work to do, the Work of our particular Stations and Places; Work that is incumbent upon us, as we ſtand thus and thus related, being Magiſtrates, or Miniſters; the Maſters of Families, or the like: For all ſuch Relations bring their Work and Duty with them. And this indeed is properly our own Work, and this we ſhould be diligent and faithful in, as ever we would be found ready for a Dying Hour. *Paul* had this Work to do, and he was diligent and faithful in the Diſcharge of it; which gave him Comfort when he came to die, 2 *Tim.* 4. 6, 7, 8. *I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my Departure is at hand. I have fought a good Fight, I have finiſhed my Courſe; henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteouſneſs*, &c. He had been faithful in the Diſcharge of his Work while he lived; and being now to die, he found the comfort and ſweetneſs of it: Yea, this was that which our Lord himſelf comforted himſelf withal, when he was to die, and in the ſenſe of it, goes to his Father with Boldneſs for his Glory. *John* 17. 14. *I have glorified thee on Earth, I have finiſhed the Work which thou gaveſt me to do.* Indeed, he had a great deal of Work given him by the Father, and he was faithful and punctual in the diſcharge of it all, which was a comfort to him now he was to die: And he himſelf tells us, *that is the Bleſſed Servant, whom when his Lord ſhall come,*

come, he ſhall find ſo doing; that is, faithful and diligent in the diſcharge of his proper Work, *Matth.* 24. 46. Truly, this is the poſture which ſome (though but few,) are found in; they make Conſcience to diſcharge the Duty that is incumbent upon them; they ſay with their Lord, *I muſt work the Work of him that ſent me, while it is Day: for the Night cometh when no Man can work*, John 9. 5. They ſee Night coming, Death coming, Judgment coming, Eternity coming; and accordingly they deſire to lay out their whole Souls in the Work of God, to live up to the Laws of Chriſt in every Relation; and they look upon that day as loſt, wherein they have not done ſomewhat for God and their own Souls: And how comfortably may ſuch look Death in the Face, when it comes! I have read the Life of an Holy Miniſter, who was ſeized upon by Sickneſs, which was unto Death, while he was Preaching the Everlaſting Goſpel; and lying a few Days Sick e'er he died, a Fellow-Labourer of his, another Holy Miniſter, coming to viſit him, and ſeeing Death in his Face, cried out in ſome Paſſion, *O dear Sir, are you going to Heaven from us?* To whom he replied, *Yes, I bleſs God that my Maſter found me in his Work.* Truly, might a Man have his Choice and Option, he would have Death to find him, while he is engaged in the Work of God. Oh, Study your own Work! Study the Work and Duty of your Chriſtian Calling: Study that Work and Duty which is incumbent

upon

upon you in your particular Relations, and beg of God a Heart to be diligent in the discharge of one and the other.

8. Would you indeed, have all right, and in order, in the matters of your Souls, e'er a Dying Hour comes? Then be sure to suffer no Distance or Estrangement to grow between God and you; but labour to keep up a constant and intimate Acquaintance with him: *Acquaint thy self with God, and be at Peace*, Job 22. 21. The more of an Holy Intimacy and Acquaintance with God we maintain, the more we are at Peace with our selves: And I am sure, the more we are at Peace in our selves, the more ready we are for a Dying Hour. Woe and alas for us! How oft do we let fall our Converse and Communion with God, and suffer sad Distances and Estrangements to grow up between him and us? And indeed, (my Beloved,) it is a sad and amazing thing to think how suddenly and imperceptibly, Distances and Estrangements will grow up between God and a Man's Soul: For my own part, should I have heard of it, only by the hearing of the Ear, and had not found it by too many sad and woful Experiences, I could not have believed how suddenly and imperceptibly Distances and Estrangements will grow up between God and a Man's Soul; yea, and that after the neareſt, livelieſt, and moſt intimate Acquaintance and Communion with him; which calls upon us to be very Watchful and Circumspect as to this thing:

thing: And (my Beloved,) as you will die with Boldneſs and Comfort, let me adviſe and perſuade you, to give all Diligence to keep up conſtant Intercourſe and Acquaintance with God, and watch narrowly againſt all Diſtance between him and you. Which of us that knows any thing of the things of God, knows not, that we ſuffer Diſtances and Eſtrangements to grow up between God and us? We cannot tell how, with any tolerable Boldneſs and Comfort, to look him in the Face in a Duty, or ſcarce to think of him with Delight; much leſs ſhall we be able to look him in the Face with Comfort in Death, in caſe we ſuffer Diſtances to grow up between him and us: Moreover, take this for a ſure Rule, that the more you are verſed in Communion with God, and do maintain an Holy Intimacy and Correſpondence with him, the more Boldneſs and Comfort you will have, when you come to die: Then you will be able to ſay, I am now going to be, and to live for ever immediately with that God, with whom I have lived with much ſweet and intimate Communion here; I am now going to converſe more fully with him in Heaven, with whom I have enjoyed much ſweet Converſe here on Earth. Should Death find a Man under Diſtances and Eſtrangements between God, and him, it muſt neceſſarily be uncomfortable unto him; but when there is an holy Intimacy kept up between God and the Soul, then the Soul need not fear, or be aſhamed to look Death and

Judg-

Judgment both in the Face: *Little Children*, ſaith *John*, *abide in them, that when he ſhall appear, we may have Boldneſs, and not be aſhamed before him at his coming*, 1 John 2. 28. We are put into Chriſt by Faith at our firſt Converſion; and we abide in him by After-Acts of Faith and Communion: And this abiding in him, is the way to have Boldneſs before him at his coming. Therefore mind this, and pray much about this; take heed of Diſtances growing up between God and you, and labour to have thoſe ſweet Viſits, thoſe ſweet Intercourſes of Love, thoſe bleſſed Acts of Communion kept up between God and you, that are wont to be kept up between him and his watchful cloſe-walking Saints. And in order hereunto, take three or four ſhort hints:

Firſt, Look upon and Eſteem, Converſe and Communion with God, to be (as indeed it is,) your higheſt Happineſs both here and in Heaven; the higheſt Happineſs Souls are capable of here, is to live in Converſe and Communion with God, in ſuch ways as are ſuitable to this preſent State; and the higheſt Happineſs Souls are capable of eternally in Heaven, is to live in the Divine Preſence, and to ſee God's Face continually, and to lodge for ever in the Boſom of his Love. We may run out to a Thouſand things, and when we have done all, this will be the higheſt; and indeed the only Happineſs of Souls, (*viz.*) To converſe with God, and to enjoy Communion with God; and they that

that miſs of this, will miſs of all Happineſs for ever. Accordingly, we ſhould prize it, and preſs after it; we ſhould account all things as nothing on this ſide God, and Communion with God in Chriſt. The Saints of Old have done ſo; *Many*, ſaith *David*, *will ſay, Who will ſhew us any Good? But, Lord, lift thou up the Light of thy Countenance upon us*, Pſalm 4. 6. As if he ſhould ſay, While others are ſeeking their Happineſs from Carnal and Earthly Enjoyments, Corn, Wine, and Oil; the Happineſs we deſire is thy Love, thy Favour, the Beamings out of the Light of thy Countenance upon our Souls. So *Pſalm* 39. 7. *Now, Lord, what wait I for? My Hope is in thee:* I have done with the Streams; as if he ſhould ſay, and I deſire to cleave wholly to the Fountain: I have done with the Creatures of which I have formerly been too fond, and I would now take up my whole Reſt, Solace and Satisfaction, in thy ſelf alone: And alſo, *Pſal.* 73. 25, 26. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee! And there is none in Earth I deſire in compariſon of thee: My Heart and my Fleſh faileth; but God is the Strength of my Heart, and my Portion for ever.* The ſame Spirit dwelt and acted in *Auſtin*. 'All Fulneſs and Plenty (*ſaith he,*) which 'is not my God, is Want and Poverty: And 'again elſewhere, 'Thou, Lord, art my God, 'my Happineſs; and unto thee, and after 'thee, do I breathe and ſuſpire Day and 'Night. O (my Beloved,) did we indeed prize Communion with God more, we

ſhould

ſhould live more in Communion with him. And this take for a certain Truth, that it will never be well with us indeed, till we ſee all in God, and account we enjoy all Happineſs, in enjoying Communion with him.

Secondly, In the cloſe of every Day, take a ſerious View of, and diligently conſider what hath paſſed between God and you, what Tranſactions there have been between God and your Souls that Day: There doth not a Day paſs, wherein there do not many things paſs between God and his People; and he that would prevent Diſtances and Eſtrangements between God and him, ſhould ſeriouſly ponder and lay to Heart, what hath paſſed between God and his Soul, what Tranſactions there have been between God and him that Day. On the one hand, ponder and conſider what hath paſſed from God to you, and what his Carriage towards you hath been, what Approaches he hath made to you, what Intimates of Love, what Overtures of Communion, what Diſcoveries of himſelf and his Glory; how far and in what way God hath been dealing with your Spirits, convincing, enlightning, quickning, or comforting of them; what Calls he hath given you, what Myrrh he hath dropped upon the handle of the Lock, what Taſtes you have had of his Sweetneſs and Grace, what Holy Impreſſions he hath made upon you, and the like. On the other hand, ponder and conſider, what hath paſſed from you

you to God, and what your Carriages towards him have been; what Acceptation and Entertainment you have given him, making his Approaches to you; what Value you have put upon his Preſence, and the Intimations of his Love; how far you have embraced and improved the Overtures he made you of farther Communion with him; what Awe there hath been upon you of his Holineſs, and his All-ſeeing Eye; what Out-goings of Heart there have been found within you after him; what Breathings of Love, what Holy Longings and Deſires, what Springings and Workings of Spiritual Joy, and Delight of Soul to him, and in him; what place he hath had in your Thoughts and Contemplations; how far you have lived to him and upon him; wherein you may have either grieved or delighted his Spirit, and the like. Thus in the cloſe of every day, ponder and conſider what hath paſſed between God and you, and accordingly deport and demean your ſelves before him. Wherein you have failed or been defective in any thing, in order to keeping up Communion between God and you, be humbled, and ſet all right by Faith and Prayer; adore God in his Acts of Grace and Condeſcention, (as to be ſure, you will find Cauſe ſo to do,) and loath your ſelves, for any Acts of Sin or Unkindneſs, Undutifulneſs, or Diſreſpect that you have been guilty of towards God: O this would be a bleſſed Courſe indeed, to prevent Diſtances and

Eſtrangements between God and you. This *David* calls, *a Communion with his own Heart*; and enjoins it as a Duty of the higheſt Importance; *Stand in awe, and Sin not; commune with your Hearts, and be ſtill*, Pſal. 4. 4. It is what he lived in the Practice of, *Pſalm* 77. 6. (if he was the Author of that Pſalm.) *I communed with mine own Heart, and my Spirit made diligent ſearch.* O be punctual in this Work!

Thirdly, Be much Converſant, and that with all Spiritual Diligence in the Ways and Duties of Communion; thoſe Ways and Duties wherein God is wont to meet his People, and maintain Converſe and Communion with them; and in all of them, wait for God and his Approaches to you. There are thoſe which we may call Ways and Duties of Communion; Ways and Duties, wherein God and his People do hold Converſe with each other, wherein God viſits and communicates himſelf unto his People, and wherein his People may be ſaid to viſit God, and make out after God; and theſe are the uſe of the Word and Sacraments, the exerciſe of Prayer, Meditation, Self-examination, and the like: Now, as ever you would prevent the growing up of Diſtances and Eſtrangements between God and you, ſee that you are much Converſant in theſe, and that with an Holy and Spiritual Diligence, waiting for God, and the Manifeſtations of God to your Souls in them; theſe are the Galleries wherein Chriſt and his People

ple do take ſweet Turns together: The green Beds wherein they lye down in the Boſom of each others Love: Therefore keep up a conſtant and diligent Attendance on God in theſe. And in all your Attendances on him, look after Converſe with him; let it be your ſolemn Aim, to Converſe with him, and ſee his Face, to have a Viſit, a Smile, a deſcent of Love from him. I do ſuppoſe you to be ſuch as do, and will attend on Publick Ordinances, and wait for God there, as they waited for the Spirit at *Jeruſalem*: That only then which I would preſs you to, in this preſent caſe, ſhall be, to be much converſant in Prayer and Meditation between God and your own Souls; in theſe two great Duties of Communion with God, ſecret Prayer and Meditation: Oh the loſs as to Communion with God, that we expoſe our ſelves unto, by being no more in Prayer, and Holy Meditation! The Holy Ones of Old, and thoſe that have been Men of the higheſt Communion with God, have alſo been Men of much Prayer, and great Meditation; as I might inſtance in *David*, and *Daniel*, and others: And indeed, their Communion with God came in, and was kept up this way. God (you know,) hath told us, *The Prayer of the Upright is his Delight*, Prov. 15. 8. And Chriſt beſpeaks the Prayer of his Spouſe, as moſt Pleaſing and Delightful to him, *Cant.* 2. 14. *O my Dove! Thou art in the clefts of the Rock, in the ſecret places of the Stairs; Let me ſee thy*

Countenance, and hear thy Voice, for ſweet is thy Voice, and thy Countenance is comely: as if he ſhould ſay, approach to me in ſecret Prayer, I will aſſure thee it will be moſt Sweet and Pleaſant to me. And as he thus delights in the Prayers of his People; ſo he will ſurely delight them in their Prayers with the Viſits of his Love, and Communications of his Grace, the beamings out of his Glory to, and upon their Souls; he hath promiſed to *make them joyful in the Houſe of Prayer*; yea, he hath promiſed to perform the whole Grace of the new Covenant in anſwer to their Prayers. *Ezek.* 36. 37. Oh the great things God doth for his People, and the ſweet Communion that is kept up between him and them, in a way of Prayer! I remember a ſaying of one, *He that is not much in Prayer, will never be a Man of much Excellency*: And I may as truly ſay, He that is not much in Prayer, is never like to be a Man of much Communion with God. And ſo for Meditation: Oh how Sweet, how Heaven-like a Duty is that! Oh how much of God is let out many times to the Souls of his People herein! *David* experienced this, *Pſal.* 63. 5, 6. *My Soul ſhall be ſatisfied as with Marrow and Fatneſs, and my Mouth ſhall Praiſe thee with joyful Lips; when I remember thee upon my Bed, and meditate on thee in the Night-watches.* While he was converſant in this Duty of Meditation, his Soul was filled with Joy and Satisfaction, as with Marrow and Fatneſs. Again, ſaith he, *My Meditation of*

thee

thee ſhall be ſweet, Pſal. 104. 34. Oh be much and frequent with God in theſe Ways and Duties of Communion.

Fourthly, Give Chriſt his due Place and Honour, in all your makings out after Communion with God. *Joſeph* told his Brethren, *They ſhould not ſee his Face, unleſs they brought their Brother* Benjamin *with them*: And truly you are not to ſee the Face of God in any of the forementioned Ways and Duties, unleſs you bring Chriſt with you, & give him his due Place and Honour therein; that is to ſay, unleſs you eye him, and act Faith upon him, as the only way and *medium* of Communion with God: Chriſt beſpeaks this at our hands, while he tells us, *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh to the Father but by me*, John 14. 6. and by his Blood it is, that we have a way opened to us into the Holy of Holies, acceſs for our Perſons and Prayer into the Divine Preſence, *Heb.* 10. 19, 20. yea, not only as he purchaſed a Liberty, and opened a way for us to approach into the Preſence of God: But having done this, by his Mediation and Interceſſion it is that any of us come to God: Hence he is ſaid *to ſave to the very uttermoſt all that come to God by him, ſeeing he ever lives to make Interceſſion for us*, Heb. 7. 25. Indeed, were it not for Chriſt, none of us could ever hope to ſee the Face of God, and live; none of us could ever hope to ſee one Smile of God's Face, one Embrace of his Boſom, any the leaſt Deſcent and Emanation of Love from him: Were it not

for Christ, when we come unto God, we should find him to be a consuming Fire, and when he and our Souls did meet, it would be as the meeting of devouring Fire, and withered Stubble. In a word, all Communication of Grace and Love from God to us, are by and through Christ, and all the Love, the Duty, the Homage we render to God, must be all tender'd to him by and through Christ, if ever we find Acceptation with him. Have Christ therefore in your Eye, in all your Approaches unto God, as to him, *by whom we have access to the Father*, Eph. 2. 18. Let the real Language of your Souls be, If I have any one smile from God, it must be upon the account of Christ, if he sheweth himself pacified towards me, it must be through his Blood; if he gives out any Grace, any Favour, any Blessing to me, it will be upon the sole account of his Mediation; if either my Person or Services be accepted of the Lord, it must be in and through this Mediator. Moreover, how great soever the distance between God and my Soul is, yet Christ can bring me nigh unto him; and however unworthy of, or unsuitable to Communion with God I am in my self, yet such is his well-pleasedness in Christ, that well-beloved Son of his, that I will hope through him to find Grace in his sight, and to be lodg'd in the Bosom of his Love. Thus put all the Honour upon Christ, that is due to him in this Business; this is what is pleasing to the Father: And the more you thus honour

nour him, the fuller and more conſtant will your Converſe and Communion with God be.

Ninthly, Would you indeed have all right and in order for a Dying Hour? Would you be ready for that laſt and great Work? Then live wholly and conſtantly upon Chriſt and his Righteouſneſs, for your Juſtification and Acceptation with God, both living and dying. The more we live out of our ſelves upon Chriſt, and his Righteouſneſs for Juſtification and Acceptation with God, the the more ready poſture we are in for a Dying Hour: This indeed is the main thing; and when we have done all that ever we can, to deck and adorn our ſelves with Grace and glorious Diſpoſitions, ſtill we muſt live out of our ſelves, and out of all thoſe Ornaments, upon the naked Righteouſneſs of Chriſt, for Juſtification and Salvation. This is that which the Scripture calls the readineſs of the Lamb's Wife, *Rev.* 19. 7, 8. *Let us be glad and rejoice, for the Marriage of the Lamb is come, and his Wife hath made her ſelf ready.* And wherein that readineſs lay, the next words will tell you: *To her was granted to be cloathed with fine Linnen, clean and white, which fine Linnen is the Righteouſneſs of the Saints*; that is, the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed to the Saints through believing: This is the *beſt Robe*, mentioned *Luke* 15. 22. a Robe indeed which covers all our Nackedneſs, that beautifies and adorns us, and renders us moſt amiable

in God's Eye. Whatsoever Spots and Blemishes, whatever Failings and Defects may be upon us, yet these are not seen, while God looks upon us as cloathed with the Righteousness of his Son; and we by Faith do live upon that Righteonsness, as the sole Matter of our Justification and Acceptance with him: And let me tell you, the more clear and distinct the Actings of our Faith are, in carrying us out of our selves, and all Self-righteousness, and relying wholly on Christ and his Righteousness, the more ready and comfortable Posture we are in for a Dying Hour. This was the great thing *Paul* coveted, and pressed after to the very last, and which he accounted all things but Dung for: *Phil.* 3. 8, 9. *I count all things but Dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having my own Righteousness, which is by the Law, but the Righteousness of Faith, the Righteousness which is of God by Faith.* He dreaded the thoughts of being found in any thing of his own; he trembled to think of standing upon his own bottom, the bottom of his own Worth and Righteousness, when he should come to die, and be cleaved intirely unto, and relied wholly upon Christ, and his most perfect Righteousness. Oh let me tell you, *Paul* had as much, and perhaps more, to have rested upon, than ten thousand of us; for Gifts, for Graces, for Priviledges, for Services, for Successes, for Sufferings for Christ, he went beyond any meer Man that ever lived; and *Chrysostom* observes

of

of him, That he feared nothing but Sin; to displeaſe God, and to diſhonour him, was the only thing that was terrible to him; and the Scripture gives a large and frequent account of his other Attainments: But ſtill he goeth on of all, and his Language is, None but Chriſt! None but Chriſt! Not but that he alſo preſſeth after the greateſt Eminency and Exactneſs in Holineſs; as you find in the following Verſes of this third to the *Philippians*: And indeed, this is the true Spirit of the Goſpel, to preſs after the greateſt Eminency and Exactneſs in Holineſs; to covet to attain, if poſſible, unto Angelical Holineſs, and yet under, and after all, to live ſingly and entirely on a naked Chriſt, and his Righteouſneſs, for Juſtification and Acceptation with God; and the more you come to, and live in this Spirit, the more ready you are for Death, and a bleſſed Eternity. This was a great part of the ground of the Churches rejoicing, *Iſa.* 61. 10. *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my Soul ſhall be joyful in my God; for he hath cloathed me with the Garments of my Salvation, and hath covered me with a Robe of Righteouſneſs*; which *Chryſoſtom*, and others both Antient and Modern, interpret of the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt: And indeed no greater ground of rejoicing to a Man or Woman, whether living or dying, than to be cloathed with the Robe of the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt: I ſhall only put you in mind of a Saying I have heard from an holy Man,

the day before he died: *My Friends*, (ſaith he, ſpeaking to my ſelf and others) *I have walked with God theſe thirty Years, and have enjoyed a good meaſure of the Aſſurance of his Love: But now that I am come to die, I do not place my Comfort on any of all theſe, but on the Infinite Satisfaction of Jeſus Chriſt.* Oh there, there, when we have done all, we muſt lay the weight and ſtreſs of our Souls, Comfort, Salvation, and All: And therefore be ſure you live out of your ſelves upon Chriſt. It is a great Saying *Luther* hath to this purpoſe, *Lord Jeſus* (ſaith he) *thou art my Righteouſneſs, and I am thy Sin: Thou tookeſt mine*, (meaning his Sin) *and thou gaveſt me thine*, (meaning his Righteouſneſs) *thou tookeſt that which thou waſt not, and thou gaveſt me that which I was not*, intending the exchange that Chriſt had made with him, giving him his Righteouſneſs for his Sin. Oh let this be the Language of our Souls to Chriſt, ſo ſhall we be found ready when a Dying Hour comes.

Tenthly, Would you indeed die with comfort? Then beg God to ſtand by you, and give you actual Grace in a Dying Hour; and make it one of your great Works, to treaſure many Prayers for this before-hand: When you have done all, ſhould God withdraw his Preſence, and the Influences of his Grace and Love from you when you come to die, Death would be in a great meaſure uncomfortable to you: But if God will be with you, if God will ſtand by you, if he will

will vouchsafe you the Influences and Communications of his Grace in a Dying Hour, then how will your Souls triumph over Death? This indeed will sweeten Death: They are great words of *David* in *Psal.* 23. 4. *Though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me:* Having the Presence of God with him, he was not, he would not be afraid, even in the very Valley of the Shadow of Death. Truly, without the Presence of God we cannot live comfortably; whatsoever our Attainments in Grace have been, yet if God withdraw his Presence from us, we can do nothing, we can bear nothing, we cannot perform the least Duty, we cannot resist the least Temptation, we cannot grapple with the least Corruption, nor carry through, as we ought, the least Difficulty; much less shall we be able to die with Comfort, if God withdraw; therefore, I say, beg God to stand by you in a Dying Hour: Let it be your daily Prayer to God.

First, That he would be with you in the Difficulties of Life.

Secondly, That he would not leave you in the Conflicts and Agonies of Death. And indeed we should not pass that day, wherein we do not treasure up one Prayer for this before-hand; and thus doing, God will not leave us, God will not fail us in that last and great Difficulty; at least, he will not leave us in point of Grace; our Lord himself was left in the Agonies of Death by the

Father:

Father, in point of Comfort, which put him to that out-cry, *Why haſt thou forſaken me?* But he was not left by him in point of Grace, ſtill a Spirit of Faith and Holineſs acted him; and therefore tho' forſaken, he cries out, *My God, My God.* If poſſibly, in conformity to our Head, we ſhould be left in that Hour in point of Comfort, yet if we carry our ſelves as we ought, we ſhall not be left in point of Grace; and if we be not left in point of Grace, all will do well, though not ſo Sweet and Joyous with us as otherwiſe it would be. And thus I have given you theſe more particular Directions, in order to a Preparation for a Dying Hour; which if you live up to, you may not only live above the fear of Death, but alſo in the joyful Expectation thereof daily.

CHAP. XI.

Being a Conſolatory Concluſion of the whole Diſcourſe; containing Encouragements againſt the Fear of Death, unto all ſuch as are found in the Practice of the foregoing Directions.

NOW for a Concluſion of the whole Matter. Upon all that hath been decared, Soul, let me ask thee one queſtion: Doſt thou indeed ſee thy particular Concern in this buſineſs? So ſee it, as really

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to make it thy great Work and Sollicitude while living, to ſet all things right, and make all ready for a Dying Hour? Some there are that are ſo happy as ſo to do; and art thou one of them? Then why ſhouldſt thou fear Death? Yea, why ſhouldſt thou not exult, and thy Heart leap within thee in the ſight and thought of its approach? True, it is a dark entry, but in leads to a fair and ſtately Palace, even the Father's Houſe: 'Tis a rough and difficult Paſſage, but it ſets thee ſafe on ſhore in a large and fat Land: True, it carries with it ſomewhat a black louring, and ghaſtly Aſpect to Nature; and Nature may at firſt poſſibly be ſtartled, and recoil at the ſight of it; but open the Eye of thy Faith, and behold it in the Glaſs of the Goſpel; view it in the Death of thy Lord and Head, and it will not appear half ſo terrible; yea, thou wilt find it to be not ſo much an Enemy as a Friend, not as a King of Terrors, but rather as a King of Comforts; not as an Object to be dreaded and trembled at, but rather to be rejoiced in, and triumphed over by thee; it will appear to be not loſs, but gain: *For me to die is gain*, ſays *Paul*, *Phil.* 1. 21. yea, it will be thy great gain, 'twill be the period of all thy Miſery, and the perfecting of all thy Happineſs; and the truth is, we are never perfectly Happy till Death comes. But for thy further Encouragement, I ſhall in a few particulars ſhew you what Death, come when it will, doth, and will do, for ſuch as make all ready for its coming.

1. Death,

1. Death, whenever it comes, will tranſlate thee, thou ready Soul, from Earth to Heaven, from a ſtrange Land to thine own Home, and Father's Houſe: And will not this be a kindneſs? As for this World, what is it to the poor Saints, but a ſtrange Land? 'Tis Heaven is their Home and Country: Hence they have confeſs'd, and do *confeſs themſelves to be Pilgrims and Strangers upon Earth*, Heb. 11. 13. and the *Pſalmiſt*, in the words immediately foregoing my Text, *Pſalm* 39. 12. owns it to God, *I am a Sojourner, and a Stranger here:* Yea, this World is not only a ſtrange Land, but a waſte howling Wilderneſs to ſuch wherein they live among wild Beaſts, Lions, Bears, Wolves, Tygers, and the like; Luſts within, and Devils without, ready daily to devour them; but when Death comes, that carries them off from this ſtrange Land, this waſte howling Wilderneſs, to their own Home and Country, which is Heaven; yea, to their Father's Houſe, there to live with him, to enjoy his Preſence, and to adore his Grace. *We know*, ſays the Apoſtle, *that when our Earthly Houſe of this Tabernacle* (ſpeaking of the Body) *ſhall be diſſolved, we have a Building with God, an Houſe not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens*, 2 Cor. 5. 1. And you know how Chriſt ſpeaks to his Diſciples, *John* 14. 2. *In my Father's Houſe are many Manſions: If it were not ſo, I would have told you*; and thither does Death carry you when it comes. Oh ſweet, Oh my Beloved, to go Home, to go to our Father's

ther's Houſe, and to poſſeſs our Manſion there, that Manſion which our Dear Lord and Head is gone before to prepare for us, how ſweet is this no think of! And how many Deaths may it ſweeten! Suppoſe one of you were ſome thouſand Miles diſtant from your Home, Country and Comforts, and you were in a waſte howling Wilderneſs, among Lions and Bears, ready to devour you, a wide Sea alſo being between home and you; and ſuppoſe withal that a Ship ſhould come and take you into her, and in a ſhort time ſet you down in your own Country, and among all your Friends and Comforts, would not this be a Kindneſs? Why this is your caſe here, O ye preparing Souls, and this is the Kindneſs Death does for you when it comes; while here, you are Ten Thouſand Miles diſtant from your Home and Country, your Friends and Comforts, and in a waſte howling Wilderneſs; but Death that ſwift Sailer comes, and in a Moment ſets you down in Heaven, your Home and Country: O how welcom ſhould it then be to you!

2. Death, when ever it comes, will carry thee from Trouble to Reſt, from a tempeſtuous Sea to a quiet Heaven; there to lye at an Anchor in the Boſom of thy ſweet Lord. This World ever was, and (for any thing I know) ever will be a place of trouble to the People of God: Sure I am, Chriſt hath told us, *In the World you ſhall have Tribulation*, John 16. 33. And who of us does not find it made good? This World is a Tempeſtuous Sea,

Sea, wherein the Waves lift up themselves; and the poor Saints are *afflicted and tossed with Tempests*, and oftentimes *not comforted*, Isa. 54. 11. We read in *Jonah* 1. 13. that *the Sea wrought and was tempestuous, and the Mariners were fain to row hard to get the Ship to shore.* And truly, thus 'tis often in the case in hand, the Sea of this World is tempestuous, it works, and the poor Saints are fain to Row hard to get safe to Shore; yea, as we read, *Acts* 27. 14. that an *Euroclydon, a tempestuous East-wind arose, and beat upon* Paul, *and others in the Ship with him*, which was ready to break all in pieces! So truly, the Saints in this World do meet with *Euroclydons*, Tempestuous Winds not a few, which beat upon them, and are ready to split all, and sink all; and now when Death comes, those Storms are all made a Calm, and they (I mean the Saints,) are brought into the desired Haven: Death sets them at rest; *There* (says *Job*, speaking of the Grave,) *the Weary are at Rest*, Job 3. 17. Death sends the Body to Rest, it frees it from all sensible Sufferings: When Death comes, thy weak Body, thy sick Body, thy pained Body, thy consumptive Body, shall have its Dismission to Rest: And Death sends the Soul to Rest, that rest in God, and with God: *Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord, henceforth they rest from their Labours*, Rev. 14. 13. and you have, I think, both together in one Scripture, *Isa.* 57. 2. where, speaking of the Righteous, 'tis said, *They shall enter into*

into Peace, They ſhall reſt in their Beds. Hence we read, that *there remaineth a Reſt unto the People of God*, Heb. 4. 9. indeed it remains, 'tis not here; but when Death comes, that ſets them down in this remaining Reſt. O what a Kindneſs muſt this be? Reſt! O how ſweet is Reſt? How deſirable is Reſt? And Reſt too after long and hard Labour and Trouble? How ſweet is Reſt to the Labouring Man, that hath wrought hard all the Day? How ſweet is Reſt to the weary Traveller, that hath gone a long and dirty Journey? How ſweet is Reſt to the ſollicitous Mariner, and how welcom is the Harbour to him, eſpecially after having been long toſt and beaten with Storms and Tempeſts? And how ſweet will Reſt be to the poor, troubled, tempted, labouring, travelling Saint, whoſe whole Life has been little elſe but Trouble, Labour, and ſore Travel; who here could ſcarce all his Days find a Reſting-place for the Soal of his Foot, the World as to him being covered with a Deluge?

3. Death, when ever it comes, will turn your Conflicts into Victory; this *Aceldama*, or Field of Blood, (for ſuch is the World,) into a Mount of Triumph, and a Throne of Glory. What is this World but an *Aceldama*, a Field of Blood to the poor Saints? Sure I am, this Life is little elſe but a perpetual War and Conflict with Luſts, with Devils, with Afflictions, and with Temptations; hence 'tis called *a Fight, a Warfare,*

fare, and the like: And the Enemies which they in this Warfare are to grapple with, are formidable Enemies: *We wreſtle not*, ſays the Apoſtle, *with Fleſh and Blood, but with Principalities and Powers, and Spiritual Wickedneſſes*, Eph. 6. 12, 13. We wreſtle not with Fleſh and Blood; that is, with Men, or any thing that is frail and weak; no, we have more potent and formidable Enemies to deal withal; we wreſtle and conflict with Devils, who are potent, ſubtil, and indefatigable. *Enemies* (as *Calvin* obſerves upon the place,) *which wound before they appear, and kill before they are ſeen; Enemies which deal not only by Force and Power, but who are Dreadful, Crafty and Subtle, yea, Enemies which have fiery Darts to caſt at us*, as afterwards he ſpeaks. And for my own part, I think it were well for us, over what it is, if theſe were the worſt Enemies we had to grapple and conflict with; but there are Legions of Luſts within, (which I look upon to be worſe Enemies,) which we do and muſt wreſtle with; (inteſtine Enemies are in many reſpects the worſt,) theſe *War againſt our Souls*, 1 Pet. 2. 11. and were it not for theſe, all the Devils in Hell could do us no hurt. Thus this Life is to the Saints a Warfare, a Conflict; and O the Wounds, the Bruiſes, the Bloodſhed which they are expoſed to in this War! Now their Peace, and then their Grace; now their Comforts, and then their Conſciences are ſorely wounded, and they lye a Bleeding for Days, and Weeks,

Weeks, and Months together; yea, ſometimes like him that was travelling from *Jeruſalem* to *Jericho*, they were wounded, and left half dead, and did not the good *Samaritan* paſs by, taking Compaſſion on them, and pour in of his Wine and Oil, his Blood and Spirit, into their Wounds, they would ſoon be wholly Dead: Well, but now when Death comes, that puts an end to this War, and ſets them all down upon a Throne of Triumph: *To him that overcometh* (ſays Chriſt,) *will I grant to ſit with me upon my Throne, even as I alſo overcame, and am ſat down with my Father on his Throne*, Rev. 3. 21. When Death comes, then you begin an Eternal Triumph with Chriſt; then the Palm will be put into your Hands, and you ſhall triumphantly cry, Victory, Victory for ever. O how ſweet will this be! How ſweet is the Victory to a Soldier that has been long and hard put to it in the Battel? And indeed, the harder the Battel, the more glorious the Triumph. 'Tis a ſweet and great Saying which I have read in *Auguſtine*, to this purpoſe, *The Conqueror*, ſaith he, *Triumphs; and unleſs he had fought, he had never conquered: And by how much the greater his Danger and Difficulty was in the Battel, by ſo much the greater is his Joy in the Triumph.* O Sirs, not only will Death ſet you upon a Mount of Triumph, but know for your Encouragement, the ſharper your Conflicts and Warfare have been here, the more glorious will your Triumph be, when Death ſhall ſet you upon the Throne.

4. Death,

4. Death, whenever it comes, will change your Bondage into Liberty, your Spiritual Thraldom into Glorious Freedom; and is not this a Kindneſs? Poor Soul, one thing here which thou bleedeſt and groaneſt under, is that Spiritual Bondage and Thraldom which thou lieſt under: And indeed, this World is no other than a Priſon, a Dungeon, an Houſe of Bondage to thee, the Land of thy Captivity: Here thou lieſt in Chains and Fetters, the Chains and Fetters of Sin and Guilt; yea, and the Iron ſometimes enters into thy Spirit. Hence we read of *the Bondage of Corruption*, which indeed is the ſoreſt Bondage in the World, a worſe Bondage ten thouſand times, than that which *Iſrael* groaned and ſighed under in *Egypt*, *who yet were made to ſerve with rigour, and whoſe Lives were made bitter with hard Bondage*, Exod. 1. 13, 14. Truly, this Luſt, and the other Luſt, this Corruption, and the other Corruption, are as ſo many *Egyptians*, cruel Task-Maſters, which make thee ſerve with rigour, and thy Life bitter to thee with hard Bondage; and, O how doſt thou groan and ſigh under the Bondage of a proud, dead, hard, carnal, unbelieving Heart, an Heart bent to backſliding from God! And indeed, who that is ſenſible of it, can but groan under it? This drew that heavy Groan from *Paul*, and bitter Outcry, *Rom.* 7. 24. *O wretched Man that I am!* ſays he. Why, *Paul*, what's the matter? *Oh*, ſays he, *I find a Law in my Members, war-*

warring againſt the Law in my Mind, and bringing me into Captivity, to the Law of Sin and Death. I am by Sin brought into Captivity to Sin, and I have a Body of Sin and Death lying heavy upon me, heavier than a Mountain of Braſs or Iron; and who can but groan? And as 'twas with him, ſo 'tis with all the Saints in their meaſure. Well, but when Death comes, Sirs, that will turn all this your Bondage into Liberty, yea, into the *glorious Liberty of the Children of God*, Rom. 8. 21. that will turn again this your Captivity: And, O how ſweet will that be? You have ſome little Taſtes of this Liberty here; for *where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty*, 2 Cor. 3. 7. and the Taſtes of it are Sweet, very Sweet; but, O how Sweet will the full Enjoyment on't be? *Paul* breaks out into Praiſes in the Faith of it before-hand, *I thank God through Jeſus Chriſt*, Rom. 7. 25. O Soul, how ſhould this make thee long for Death? Can a Priſon, can a Houſe of Bondage, can a State of Thraldom be pleaſant to thee? Canſt thou be well pleaſed to lye in Chains and Fetters of Sin and Guilt? Shouldſt thou not rather welcom that which alone would work thy Deliverance?

5. Death, when ever it comes, will be the Death of all your Sins, and the Perfection of all your Graces; and will not that be a kindneſs? Poor Saint, how doſt thou here Bleed and Groan under the ſenſe of the Life and Vigour of thy Sins on the one hand, and of

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the Weakneſs and Imperfection of thy Graces on the other hand? Yea, how great are Conflicts and Holy Contentions of thy Spirit, to kill and bring down the one, and to quicken and perfect the other? How doſt thou, with the Holy Apoſtle of Old, *forgetting thoſe things which are behind, follow after, that thou mayeſt apprehend that for which alſo thou art apprehended of Chriſt Jeſus, preſſing towards the Mark*, &c. *Phil.* 3. 12, 13, 14. Oh the Watchings, the Warnings, the Wreſtlings of thy Soul for more Grace, more Holineſs, more Victory over, and cleanſing from Sin! Oh the many Prayers and Tears, Sighs and Groans, that thou poureſt out between God and thy Soul, in order hereunto! Theſe things are the buſineſs of the Life; yea, and after all, Sin is ſtill ſtrong and lively, and Grace is ſtill weak and imperfect; the Senſe of which breaks thy Heart almoſt, and makes thee go mourning all the day long: What, daily cleanſing thy ſelf, and yet ſtill unclean! Daily perfecting Holineſs, yet ſtill imperfect! Oh how ſad is this! Well, but Soul, when Death comes, things will be ſtrangely alter'd with thee; that will do that for thee in one moment, which thou by a whole Life of Prayers, Tears, Faith, Watching, Warring, Labouring, couldſt not do; 'twill make thee perfect: Hence thoſe above are ſaid to be ſo, *The Spirits of Juſt Men made perfect*, Heb. 12. 23. then *all that is imperfect will be done away, and that which is perfect ſhall come*, 1 Cor.

1 Cor. 13. 10. perfect Grace, perfect Holiness. Now there is much lacking in thy Faith, thy Love, thy Obedience, thy Humility, thy Heavenliness, thy Joy and Delight in God; but Death when it comes, will make up all in a moment: Yea, now thou art stained and defiled with Sin, and this Lust, and the other Lust stirs, and works, and wars with thee; but when Death comes, that will purge away all: Death is the Saints only perfect cleanser through Christ. Indeed, 'tis said of wicked Men and Hypocrites, that *their Iniquity shall lye down with them in the Dust*, Job 20. 11. which is a dreadful Word indeed; Death does not kill their Sins; no, they live in the Grave; they go with them into the other World, and will there live in them for ever, which will be a great part of their Torment: 'Twill be indeed (however they may not think of it,) the one half of Hell; for what is Hell, but Sin at the highest, and Wrath at the hottest? But though it be thus with Wicked Ones, yet 'tis otherwise with the Saints: Death, through the Grace of Christ, will for ever put a Period to your Sin, and perfect your Graces. Oh Sweet! who would not welcom Death!

6. Death, when ever it comes, will set thee above all afflictive Distances, between God, Christ, the Comforter, and thee, and will set down thy Soul in the full, constant, and immediate Vision and Fruition of all for-

forever; and is not this Sweet? Poor Saint, here thou complaineſt, that *God is a Stranger to thee, and as a way-faring Man, that turneth aſide to tarry but for a Night.* Thou haſt only now and then a ſhort Viſit from him, *Jer.* 14. 8. Thou complaineſt, that *thy Beloved withdraws himſelf, and is gone*, Cant. 5. 6. Thou complaineſt, that *the Comforter that ſhould relieve thy Soul, is far from thee*, Lam. 1. 18. Thou complaineſt of many ſad and woful Diſtances from God, and of the Lowlineſs of thy Communion, and well thou mayeſt! For indeed, how little a Portion is there here ſeen, or enjoyed of him by thee? Well, but when Death comes, that will lift thee above all thoſe Diſtances between God and thee, Chriſt and thee, and ſet thee down in the full, conſtant, and immediate Viſion and Fruition of him for ever: The thoughts of which made *Paul*, and others, to deſire to be gone, and to chuſe Death rather than Life, 2 *Cor.* 7. 6, 7, 8. *We are confident*, (ſays he,) *knowing that whilſt we are at home in the Body, we are abſent from the Lord, for we walk by Faith, not by Sight; we are confident, I ſay, and willing rather to be abſent from the Body, and to be preſent with the Lord.* Pray obſerve, *Paul* enjoyed as much of God and Chriſt here, as moſt did, and yet all that Communion he enjoyed here, he accounted as no Communion to that which he ſhould enjoy after Death; while we are preſent *in the Body*, ſays he; that is, while we live in this World,

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we are abſent from the Lord, abſent from God and Chriſt, our Communion here is but Diſtance and Eſtrangement, ſo low and unconſtant is it, in compariſon of what we know we ſhall enjoy after Death: And therefore, ſays he, we had rather be abſent from the Body, we had rather be gone hence, and be preſent with the Lord. Death will bring us to another Gueſs, Preſence and Enjoyment of God and Chriſt, than here we ſhall ever be able to reach unto. Alas! All we enjoy of God and Chriſt here, is but as an Earneſt; ſo the Apoſtle ſpeaks in the Verſe foregoing: *He that hath wrought us for this ſelf-ſame thing, is God, who alſo hath given us the Earneſt of the Spirit:* But when Death comes, we ſhall enjoy the full Inheritance: All we enjoy here, is but as the Firſt-Fruits; *we that have the Firſt-Fruits of the Spirit*, ſays the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 8. 23. But when Death comes, we ſhall have the full Vintage, full Incomes of Love, full Manifeſtations of Light, and Life, and Glory, *Fulneſs of Joy and Pleaſure* in the Divine Preſence, *Pſalm* 16. 11. full Embraces in Chriſt's Boſom, full Views of his Face, full Viſions of his Glory. Death, when it comes, will bring us to the Beatifical Viſion, which is all Good and Happineſs in one; *Bleſſed are the Pure in Heart, for they ſhall ſee God*, Mat. 5. 8. They do ſee God now, they ſee him by Faith, and thoſe Sights of him are ſweet, glorious, Soul-raviſhing and transforming Sights:

But after Death they ſhall have other Sights of him, ſuch Sights of him as will even infinitely ſurpaſs all that ever they had, or were capable of here. Here *they ſee him but through a Glaſs darkly*; that is, they have but low, obſcure, mediate Sights of him; they ſee and enjoy but little of him; but when Death comes, then *they ſhall ſee him face to face*; that is, fully, clearly, immediately, 1 *Cor.* 12. 12. The Sum is, as a Learned Man gives it us, that *in this Life we have but ſlow and ſlender Sights and Enjoyments of God, in compariſon of what we ſhall ſee, know, and enjoy of him in Eternal Life*, Glaſ. Rhet. Here they ſee but his Back-Parts, as God ſaid to *Moſes*; but when Death comes, they ſhall ſee his Face, that is, his Glory: Here they ſee him, but negatively, as it were what he is not; but then they ſhall ſee him as he is, 1 *John* 3. 2. *We ſhall ſee him as he is*, in all his Glorious Excellencies and Perfections. In ſhort, they ſhall then have ſuch Sights and Enjoyments of God and Chriſt, as ſhall eternally fill, delight, ſolace, ſatisfie, and ſet at reſt their Souls for ever; ſuch Sights, and Enjoyments, as ſhall ſo ſolace and ſatisfie them, as that there ſhall be no room for the leaſt tittle or *iota* of a deſire for ever; yea, ſuch Sights and Enjoyments, as ſhall ſo ſatisfie them, as to leave them under an utter impoſſibility of ever turning aſide from them to any thing elſe, and ſo an eternal impoſſibility of Sinning. O how ſweet

muſt this be! And indeed the Schoolmen, I find, and others from them, give this as one reaſon, why the Saints in Heaven are impeccable, becauſe the Sight and Enjoyment they have of God there, is ſo full and ſatisfying, as they cannot turn aſide to any thing elſe. O welcom Death that brings us to thoſe Sights, thoſe Enjoyments of God, the chief Good. Once more.

7. Death, when ever it comes, will bring you to, and ſet you down in the Enjoyment of an Eternal Sabbath: And, Oh how ſweet is this! *There remaineth a Reſt* (the Word is, *a Sabbath, or Sabbatiſm,*) *to the People of God*, Heb. 4. 9. Ay, but when ſhall they enjoy it? Why truly, when Death comes, that will enter them upon it immediately; upon the Night of Death, dawns the Eternal Sabbath. True, the Saints enjoy a Sabbath here, and the Sabbath to them, is the ſweeteſt and amiableſt Day in all the Week; 'tis a Day of Joy and Holy Feaſting to their Souls; and O! how many times do your Souls long for it? But alas! theſe Sabbaths have an end; but the Sabbath Death will ſet them down in, will be an Eternal Sabbath, an Eternal Sabbath, wherein they ſhall be employed in the higheſt Acts of Worſhip and Adoration, even Love, Praiſe, Admiration and Halleluja's for ever; wherein there will be no Wearineſs, no Faintneſs, wherein there ſhall be no Intermiſſion; no going to Duties, and breaking off again, as here we do; but a whole

Eternity ſhall be employed in Acts of Divine Worſhip and Adoration; wherein there ſhall be no Deadneſs, no Dullneſs, no Spiritual Indiſpoſitions, no unſuitableneſs in us to thoſe high and holy Exerciſes which this Sabbath will be fill'd with; but our Souls ſhall be perfectly ſuited to, and fitted for thoſe glorious Employs, wherein not a few only, and thoſe ſome Saints, and ſome Sinners, ſome good, and ſome bad, ſhall join together in Acts of Worſhip; but an innumerable Company both of Saints and Angels, and all theſe perfect Holy, *Heb.* 12. 22, 23, 24. Oh, how ſweet and glorious will this be! 'Tis a great Saying which I have read in a Worthy Divine, *Sabbaths here are comfortable*, ſays he, *and we have taſted ſome ſweet, ſome comfort in ſome Sabbaths; but taſte all the comfort that ever you had in all the Sabbaths you have enjoyed here, and all will be nothing to the Comforts and Sweetneſs of the Eternal Sabbath.* Alas! the perpetual Sabbath that ſhall be hereafter, that will be the Accompliſhment of all theſe Sabbaths; how ſweet then muſt that be! O ye Saints of God lift up your Heads, Death will ſet you down in this Sabbath. How have ſome of us longed ſometimes for the coming of the Sabbath! And how have we grieved when it has been gone? Well, but when Death comes, that will bring you to a Sabbath that ſhall never end. 'Tis a ſweet Saying of *Auſtin*, *There* (ſays he, ſpeaking of Heaven,) *is the great Sabbath, that hath no Even-*

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ing, no end, on which we ſhall reſt and behold, behold and love, love and praiſe for ever. Oh bleſſed be God for this Sabbath: And bleſſed be God that Death, when it comes, ſhall bring us to this Sabbath. Well then, fear not Death, dread not Death, but be found Diligent and Faithful in the uſe of the Helps preſcrib'd for the preparing of your Souls for it; and then it will greatly befriend you when ever it comes, and you may exult and rejoice in it.

I ſhall now conclude; but I muſt beg all that read this plain Diſcourſe, deeply and frequently to conſider and contemplate theſe things.

1. Every day ſeriouſly conſider and contemplate the exceeding Worth of your Souls, and the great things they are capable of. 'Tis ſad to think, what low Thoughts the moſt of Men have of their Souls; they are content to ſell their Souls, to loſe their Souls, to damn their Souls, and all for a Luſt, for a little of this World, a little carnal, ſenſual Pleaſure and Delight here, which is but for a moment. That Rebuke which *Auſtin* gave one, is due to the moſt: *How comes it to paſs*, ſays he, *that among all the good things, thou wilt let nothing be in an ill caſe, but thy Self, thy Soul!* Truly, the moſt of Men are ſollicitous to have all well but their Souls; they will have it go well with their Bodies, their Names, their Eſtates, their Fa-

milies, but their Souls they mind not. But, my Beloved, I beſeech you, think deeply and frequently of the Worth of your Souls, and the Concerns of them: O! 'tis your Souls that is your principal part. Chriſt, who beſt knew the Worth of Souls, tells you, that the whole World is nothing to one Soul, and that the Gain of the one cannot recompence the Loſs of the other, no not in the leaſt, *Mat.* 16. 26. And you know what a Price he was pleaſed to pay for Souls, even his own Blood, his precious Blood, Life and all, 1 *Pet.* 1. 19. Beſides, there are two things which ſpeak the Soul to be a thing of unſpeakable Worth and Value: Its vaſt Capacity, and its abſolute Immortality. (1.) The Capacity of the Soul ſpeaks its Worth: O what great things is the Soul of Man capable of! There is a kind of Infiniteneſs, as a Worthy Divine obſerves, in the Soul of Man; 'tis capable of even an Infinite Happineſs, or an Infinite Miſery; 'tis capable of Eternal Life, or Eternal Death; 'tis capable of unconceivable Communications both of Love and Wrath, and muſt one day be fill'd with the one or the other of them; 'tis capable of knowing God, or bearing his Image, of enjoying Glorious Communion with him, yea, of living God's own Life, and in a Participation of his own Bleſſedneſs: Look whatever the Angels enjoy, look whatever the Humane Soul of Chriſt enjoys, that the Soul is capable of the Enjoyment of. Sinner, O how pre-

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cious does this ſpeak it to be! And how great ſhould thy Concern be for it, while Day and Seaſon laſts! Contemplate it therefore a little, and ſay, O how precious is my Soul, and what great things is it capable of! And it being ſo, why do I take up in ſuch low, poor, dungy, droſſie things, as the beſt of Sin and this World are? Secondly, The Immortality of the Soul, argues its Worth. The Soul never dies: It is indeed, but as it were a Spark, a Beam of God's own Immortality breathed into the Body; at leaſt, there is a Stamp and Impreſs thereof upon it: The Body, that dies, that returns to Duſt; but the Soul, that lives, that goes to God, *Eccleſ.* 12. 7. As the Mortality of the Body, as the Learned Man obſerves; ſo the Immortality of the Soul is here aſſerted. Beſides, *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, with the reſt of the good old Patriarchs, and the Servants of God, who died long ſince, are notwithſtanding living ſtill; ſo Chriſt argues you know, *Matth.* 22. 32. that is, their Souls live, as indeed do the Souls of all that are gone hence; their Souls will live either in Happineſs or Miſery, with God or Devils; and ſo muſt thine and mine, Sinner. When our Bodies ſhall be eaten by the Worms, our Souls will live either in Heaven or Hell. O think of this, daily contemplate and ſay, I have a Soul within me that muſt live for ever, and that as filled with even an Infinite Happineſs or Miſery; I have a

Soul within me that is capable of unſpeakable Joys, or unconceivable Torments, and in the one or the other it will, it muſt live for ever: Why then am I not more concerned for it?

2. Seriouſly contemplate, and daily keep your Spirits on the Thoughts of the Wonderful Weight and Importance of Eternity, the greateſt of the Concern of the other World. O Eternity, Eternity! O vaſt, great, boundleſs Eternity! How ſhall I do to ſpeak of thee? How are my Thoughts loſt, and my Spirits overwhelmed, when I ſet my ſelf to contemplate, how great, how weighty a thing thou art? An endleſs, boundleſs, bottomleſs State; a State that admits of neither Change, Pauſe, nor Period for ever. A State of unconceivable Happineſs or Miſery: Happineſs in the Enjoyment, or Miſery in the Loſs of, and Baniſhment from God and Chriſt for ever. Happineſs is the Fruition of Infinite Love, or Miſery in the Revelation of Infinite Wrath, one of which every Soul muſt be the Object of for ever. Eternity! Such is the weight of it in it ſelf, that indeed we know not how to conceive of it: Every thing but Eternity has an end at laſt: So innumerable as the Stars of Heaven are, yet there is a laſt Star, and the Number of them has an end, though we cannot reach it. So innumerable as the Sands on the Sea-ſhore are, yet there is a laſt Sand, and the Number of them has an End, could we reach to it: So numerous as the Piles

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of Graſs, which are now, and from the Creation of the World have been, and to the End of the World ſhall be, are, yet there is an End of the Number of them, could we reach it; there is a laſt Pile, a laſt Spire of Graſs: So innumerable as the Grains of Corn, in all the Harveſts that ever were, or ſhall be, are, yet the Number of them has an End, though we cannot reach it, and there is a laſt Grain: So innumerable as all the Drops of Rain that ever did fall, or ſhall fall upon the Earth, from the Creation, to the End of the World, are, yet ſtill there is a laſt Drop; yea, and that tho' all the Drops contained in the wide and deep Sea be added thereunto: So innumerable as the Children of Men have been, are, and ſhall be, to the End of all things: So innumerable as all the Hairs of the Head of them all have been, are, and will be: So innumerable as all the Thoughts of the Hearts of all throughout all Ages have been, are, and will be: So innumerable as all the Brutes and Animals, which both the Earth and the Sea have brought forth, do, and will bring forth, are, and will be, yet ſtill the Number of them has an End, could we reach it; and there is a laſt Man, a laſt Hair, a laſt Thought, a laſt Animal: Should all the vaſt Body of the Heavens, which our Eyes behold, be full written with Figures by the Hand of an Angel; yet the Number of thoſe Figures would have an end, and there would be a laſt Figure: But as for

Eternity, that has no end, no laſt. Could all thoſe vaſt numbers prementioned be put together into one, who could in the leaſt conceive of the thouſand thouſand part of it? Yet all this were nothing to Eternity, no, not a thouſand thouſand part of it. Thus Eternity is unconceivably weighty in it ſelf, and 'tis Eternity indeed that puts weight into all other things: 'Tis Eternity that puts weight into the future Judgment. What were that Judgment, but that 'tis eternal Judgment? *Heb.* 6. 2. 'Tis Eternity that puts weight indeed into the Happineſs and Joys of Heaven: What were that Happineſs and thoſe Joys, were they not Eternal? Hence 'tis called *Eternal Life*, *Eternal Glory*, *a never fading Crown*, *an everlaſting Kingdom*, *Joy and Pleaſure for evermore*. So (you know) the Scripture ſpeaks of it, as that which is its Crown and Perfection; hence we read *of being for ever with the Lord*, 1 Theſſ. 4. 17. To be with the Lord is ſweet: *Peter* found it ſo; all the Saints in their meaſure find it ſo here. But to be with the Lord (for ever,) that makes it infinitely Sweet indeed: Thus and thus (forever) in the Boſom of my Father's Love, and there (for ever) in the views of my Redeemer's Glory, and there (for ever) joined within an innumerable Company of Angels, in loving, praiſing, admiring, adoring, and ſinging Hallelujahs to God and the Lamb; and this (for ever) to be fully ſwallowed up in the Divine Life, the Divine Will, the Divine Preſence, the Di-

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vine Fulneſs, and this (for ever) to be ſet above all Sin, to be delivered from an unavoidable neceſſity of Sinning, to an abſolute impoſſibility of Sinning, and this (for ever.) O how ſweet, how glorious is this! This one Word, *Eternity*, or *for ever*, is that which puts great ſweetneſs into it. Again, 'tis Eternity that indeed puts Weight into the Miſeries and Torments of the Damned: What were the Fire of Hell, were it not unquenchable Fire? What were the Worm there, were it not a never-dying Worm? When the Scripture would ſpeak of the exceeding Greatneſs and Severity of thoſe Torments, (you know) 'tis in his Language, *There the Worm never dies, and the Fire is never quenched*, Mark 9. 44. Their Miſeries and Torments are eternal; and indeed Hell would be no Hell, in Compariſon, had it not Eternity in it. Moſt weighty is the Meditation, which I have read in a Learned and Holy Man to this purpoſe: *O Eternity! Eternity! O never-ending Eternity! O Eternity, that can be meaſured by no Space of Time, that can be perceived or apprehended by no Humane Intellect or Underſtanding! How unconceivably doſt thou augment the Torments of the Damned!* And but a few Lines after he again cries out, *O Eternity! Eternity! Thou, and thou alone doſt aggravate the Torments, the Puniſhments of the Damned, beyond all Meaſure.* Heavy is the Puniſhment of the Damned, becauſe of its Sharpneſs, its Extenſiveneſs, its Univerſality, there being all Plagues and Puniſhments in it;

it; but says he, 'tis most heavy, because of its Eternity. Oh! 'tis this indeed that makes it intolerably great and heavy. Oh! not only to be banished from God and Christ, to be driven from the Beatifical Vision, but to be banished and driven from hence for ever. Oh doleful! to be in the Flames, to suffer the Vengeance of Eternal Fire, to be sinning, and always bearing the Punishment of Sin, and all this (for ever.) O this makes it out of Measure heavy, thus, and always thus, under the Wrath of God, and for ever so! This put Weight into it. Thus you see a little of the Weight of Eternity. O contemplate it daily!

3. Consider and contemplate how doleful a thing it will be to miscarry for ever, and on the other Hand, what a wide Door of Mercy there is open to you, and the fair Opportunity you have of making a blessed Provision for your Souls and Eternity.

4. Consider and contemplate how doleful a thing it will be to miscarry for ever, to perish Eternally; the more worth there is in the Soul, and the greater weight there is in Eternity, the more doleful it will be to perish or miscarry: As to the Interest of them to miscarry in our Estate, in our Trade, in our Name, in the Change of our Condition in this World, or the like; this is sad, and sinks many; but Oh, what is this to the Miscarriage of the Soul for ever! What is this to miserable Eternity, to the loss of God, of Christ, of the Comforter,

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of Heaven, and Eternal Life? What is this to the Wrath of God, to the Vengeance of Eternal Fire, to utter Darkneſs, to Blackneſs of Darkneſs for ever? O Sirs! to have Infiniteneſs and Eternity combine againſt you, to make you miſerable, and to be for ever as miſerable, as Infiniteneſs and Eternity can make you, (as aſſuredly you will, in caſe you neglect to make Proviſion for your Souls, and the future Life,) O how dreadful, how doleful will this be! And what bitter Lamentations will it fill you with for ever! Did *Eſau* weep when he had loſt his Birthright; and did *Lyſimachus* upbraid himſelf, and bewail his Folly, for parting with his Kingdom for a Draught of Water? O then how will you weep and wail, and even tear and torment your ſelves for ever for your Sin and Folly, when you ſhall find, that for a little of this World, for the Satisfaction of a Luſt, for a few dreggy, droſſie Pleaſures, and Senſual Delights, or perhaps, through a meer Sloth of Spirit, you have loſt your Souls, and have plunged your ſelves into an Infinite Ocean of Eternal Woe and Miſery, whence there is no Redemption for ever for you! Pray lay that Scripture to Heart now, *Luke* 13. 27, 28. *Depart from me*, ſays Chriſt, *all ye Workers of Iniquity*. Depart; here is the Doom that will paſs at laſt upon every Unrepenting, Unbelieving Sinner, every Soul, that makes not ready for a Dying Hour: Well, and what then? *There*

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ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of Teeth, when you ſhall ſee Abraham, Iſaac, *and* Jacob, *and all the Prophets in the Kingdom of God, and you thruſt out.* O Sirs! when you ſhall ſee ſuch and ſuch lodged ſafe in Heaven, in the Boſom of Chriſt, and your ſelves ſhut out; and not only ſo, but caſt into utter Darkneſs, as you have it added, *Matth.* 18. 12. When you ſhall ſee your ſelves ſhut up in the Infernal Pit, and there ſealed up under God's Eternal Wrath, O then you will weep and gnaſh your Teeth indeed! Then your own Conſcience will be Eternally a ſecond Hell to you, tearing and tormenting your Souls in the Remembrance of your Sin and Folly, in neglecting to prepare for, and make ſure of a better State. Think of theſe things e're it be too late.

2. Conſider and contemplate what a wide Door of Mercy there is open to you, and what a fair Opportunity God gives you, to make a Bleſſed Proviſion for your Souls and Eternity. What ſhall I ſay? Why, Sirs, the way of Salvation is made plain to you, and you are daily called to the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb; the great King of Heaven invites you to come, and partake of this Goſpel-Feaſt; by one and another Servant of his, which he ſends to you, he lets you know that all things are ready; all that your Souls can need to make them happy for ever; Chriſt is ready, and in him Life

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is ready, Grace is ready, Peace is ready, Pardon is ready, a compleat Righteouſneſs, or your Juſtification, and Acceptation with God, is ready; Heaven is ready, Salvation is ready, and withal, he bids you come, yea, he earneſtly importunes and ſollicites you to come, and feaſt your Souls upon theſe things; he freely and frequently offers himſelf and all to you, intreating your Acceptance: Yea, more, he opens the Arms of his Love to you, aſſuring you of moſt cordial Welcom, and ready Reception, notwithſtanding all your Sins and Miſcarriages. *Him that cometh unto me, I will by no means caſt out*, John 6. 37. Let him be who and what he will, a young or an old Sinner, a ſmall or a great Sinner, a Sinner that hath ſtood it out againſt me a little or a long time; I will not caſt him out, my Grace is free, my Fulneſs is large and ſufficient, my Blood is precious, and this has an Infinite Virtue in it: My Spirit is Powerful and Efficacious; I am every way mighty to ſave, able to *ſave to the utmoſt all that come unto God by me*: Yea, 'tis my Work and Buſineſs to ſave; my Father ſeal'd and ſent me for that end, and for that end came I into the World, and there did and ſuffered ſuch things as I did; and I may not, I will not caſt off any poor Soul that will come and partake of Me and my Fulneſs, and that would fain be helped on towards Life and

and Bleſſedneſs. This is really the Language of Chriſt to poor Sinners; yea, more, he ſends his Spirit to Enlighten, to Convince, to Perſwade, to Draw and Allure them; and he does Move in them, and Strive with them: O what a wide Door of Mercy is there here open to you, Sirs! And how fair is your Opportunity of preparing for, and making ſure of a Bleſſed Eternity? O! accordingly as you love your Souls, and would live for ever, come into Chriſt, come, and apply, and improve him in a way of believing, for the Good of your Eternal Souls; in his Strength ſet upon repenting: Believing, work the Work of your Souls and Eternity; and your Day being ſo bright, as indeed it is, O labour to know the things of your Peace in your Day! Leſt neglecting them, Chriſt ſpeedily ſay of you, as once with Tears in his Eyes he did of Neglecting *Jeruſalem*, Luke 19. 42. *O that thou hadſt known in thy Day the things which belong to thy Peace! but now they are hid from thine Eyes* ——— I have done: I'll cloſe all with that Holy Wiſh for you, my dear Congregation, and my ſelf, that *Auſtin* was wont to make for himſelf, and his People, namely, *That as they had been often crowded together to worſhip God in that Earthly Temple, wherein he preached, ſo they might Eternally live together in the Heavenly Temple*

ple above. So my Wiſh and Deſire is, That we, my Beloved, You and I, who have often been throng'd and crouded together in an Earthly Houſe, may live together Eternally, and Eternally adore God together in our Father's Houſe above: And if we ſhall never Preach and Pray, Hear and Sing together more on Earth, (as I am apt to think we ſhall not) yet that we may Praiſe, Love, and Admire God, and ſing Hallelujahs to him for ever together in Heaven. *Amen, Amen.*

Mr.

Mr. *Pearſe*'s laſt LETTER TO HIS FLOCK.

To my dearly Beloved Friends, that ſmall Company, to whom, by the Providence of God, I have ſome Years laſt paſt, Preached the Everlaſting Goſpel.

Dearly and Longed for in our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; Grace, Mercy, and Peace unto you, from God our Father, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by the Eternal Spirit.

IT is now many Years ſince, by the Providence of God, we have been called to Worſhip his Great and Reverend Name togegether; during which time, God hath been exceeding good to us, manifeſting his Power in our Weakneſs, and his Love in our Unworthineſs: He hath declared his Name to be Recorded

corded amongst us, by his coming to us, and Blessing of us: Some of you have been Convinced, some Converted, some Edified, and all, (I hope,) quickned and encouraged Heavenwards: And not only your selves, but, through the Grace of God, many others have been born to Christ amongst us, and more built up in the Holy Faith. O the many warm, sweet and refreshing Sabbaths we have enjoyed together! And what shall we say to these things, or what shall we do? O, let us bow down at the Foot of God, and adore his Infinitely, Infinitely, Infinitely, Free, Rich and Powerful Grace, ascribing all the Glory to that alone, to which (I am sure,) all is due. God hath now called me aside from you, and not only from you, but he seems to be calling me out of his Vineyard, yea, out of this World: I have long had a Weak and Infirm Body, but now God in his Wise and Holy Providence, hath seen good to reduce me to a far lower and weaker State of Body, my Health being now utterly broken: Yet I must say, God is exceeding good to me, and deals in Fatherly Tenderness with me: I have neither much Sickness, nor much Pain, only my Disease, according to its Name, gradually consumes me; nor am I without some lucid Intervals: God both lifts me up, and casts me down, (as he dealt with the Church of Old:) Sometimes I am under some Revivings, which seem to give hopes of a Return from the Grave; anon, nothing but Death seems to be in view: And in this dubious State, I am waiting upon the Will of God, which (I am sure,) is Holy, Wise, and Good, and which, (I hope)

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shall be welcome to me, whether it be for Life or Death: Hitherto, through Grace, Death hath not been terrible to me; what it may be, in its nearest Approaches, I cannot tell; but I look to, and rest upon him, who hath destroyed both Death, and him that had the Power of Death.

And now only two things I beg of you: One is, That you all give me a room in your Prayers, while I am in the Land of the Living, and I desire you would beg of God these things for me.

First, That all Sin and Guilt cleaving to me, may be fully expiated and discharged through the Blood of Christ. O beg both Forgiveness and Repentance for me, which (God knows,) I greatly need.

Secondly, That my Will may be throughly resigned up into the Will of God, either for Life or Death.

Thirdly, That I may have much of God's Presence with me, and may always have good Thoughts of Him, and his Dispensations towards me, in all He doth, or shall lay upon me.

Fourthly, That if God should please to restore me, I may come out of this Furnace purified and refined, as Gold that is tried seven times, and more fitted for my Master's Service: Or, if his pleasure is, (which seems at present most probable,) to put a Period to my Mortal Life, that his Love, and the Light of his Countenance, may shine upon me, to sweeten the bitter Pains of Death to me; we cannot live comfortably without his Love, much less can we die comfortably without it. That is my first Request.

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The other is, That you will accept and embrace some plain, but weighty Counsels. God is my Record, that my Heart's Desire and Prayers for you, is, and has been, that you may be saved, and in love to your Salvation I leave these Directions with you.

1. *Above all things, look well to, and labour to make sure of an Union with Christ, knowing assuredly, that without Union with him, all your Religion is vain and ineffectual.*

2. *Take heed of too much addictedness to this World, as remembring, that if any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him: And that the Friendship of this World is Enmity to God.*

3. *Dwell much within, and be much conversant in Heart-work, in studying the Heart, searching the Heart, cleansing the Heart, keeping the Heart, looking always upon it as the veriest Cheat and Impostor in the World, deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.*

4. *Take heed of splitting upon that fatal Rock of Self-deceit, of which you have sometimes heard, and upon which the greatest part of Professors split and perish for ever.*

5. *Set up, and keep up the Worship of God, both in your Families and Closets: For the Lord's sake, let none of yours be Prayerless Families.*

6. *Always maintain a great Honour and Reverence for all God's Ordinances, and in an especial manner, Honour and Sanctifie his Sabbath: The Sabbath Day is your Souls Market-Day: O lose not your Market!*

7. *Be*

7. *Be universally Honest and Upright in your Callings, and your Dealings in them: The fraudulent Dealings of Professors, do much reproach the Gospel.*

8. *Covet to seat your selves under a sound, clear, searching Gospel Ministry, and keep mainly to the same Ministry; and the Lord guide you therein.*

9. *Labour that your profitting under the Ministry may appear unto all Men: It will be a dreadful thing to enjoy rich Means, and bring forth no Fruit to Perfection: O Sirs, be Fruitful Christians!*

10. *Expect further Trials and Sufferings, and prepare for them: There is a dark and gloomy Day coming, such as (I am apt to think,) you and I have never seen any like unto it, and such as (wherein possibly,) you will think it best with them that God shall have hid in the Grave beforehand: But be not troubled, it will be short; and a Glorious Day will follow, a Day wherein the Church of God shall sing the Song of Moses and of the Lamb, a Day wherein our Dear Lord and Head shall reign Gloriously: And therefore.*

11. *Pray and long, long and pray much and earnestly for the coming of the Day of God, for the coming of Christ's Kingdom:* Thy Kingdom come, *is a Petition should be much upon our Hearts. O do not rest in low things, as to Divine Appearances and Manifestations, both in the World, and in your own Souls. These Counsels I leave with you, out of that entire Love and Affection I bear to your Salvation, and our*

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Lord's Honour, as concerned in you. I will conclude all with that solemn and cordial Profession to you, which Augustine *often made to those to whom he was wont to Preach,* viz. *This it is the desire of my Soul, that as we have been often crowded together to Worship God in one Earthly House or Temple, so we may all Worship him together for ever, in the Heavenly House or Temple: And if we must never Pray, and Preach, and Hear, and Mourn together more on Earth, yet we may Love, and Sing, and Praise, and Admire, and Rejoice together for ever in Heaven: Which that we may do, the God of Peace, (who brought again from the Dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that Great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant,) make us perfect in every good Work to do his Will, working in you and me, that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be Glory for ever and ever.* Amen *and* Amen.

My dear Friends, I am your weak and languishing, but yet cordial Friend, and willing Servant, in Christ, and for Christ,

EDWARD PEARSE.

FINIS.